

C. G. Lefevre

REFLECTIONS

ON

THE WAR.

IN ANSWER TO

REFLECTIONS ON PEACE,

ADDRESSED TO

MR. PITT, AND THE FRENCH NATION.

By FRANCIS D'IVERNOIS, Esq.

At first, the arms of France were too much despised; now they are too much dreaded.

REFLECTIONS ON PEACE, p. 8.

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JUNE, 1795.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE Translator of the following Work has undertaken a task, which, he fears, those who have read the original will wish had been placed in abler hands: but he claims, both for himself and the Author, that indulgence which a candid Reader will always allow to a publication, that, from the nature of the subject, cannot be seasonable, unless hastily written, and as hastily translated.

The work to which it is intended as an answer, has been industriously circulated on the Continent, particularly in France; where, from the eloquence and political knowledge of the author, Madame de Stael, daughter of the celebrated Mr. Necker, it has found a very favourable reception. She earnestly recommends an immediate peace to all parties; but many of her observations seem rather calculated to defeat than to promote her benevolent intention: for surely, insinuations that this country suffers itself to be blindly led by ministerial intrigue, that its resources must soon fail, that any exertions which it can make in this contest must be ineffectual, and that its government may eventually be dissolved, have an evident tendency to discourage our Allies, to raise the hopes of our enemies, and to make the work of peace more difficult.

The Author of this answer to Madame de Stael is her countryman, and well known to those who are acquainted with the late transactions at Geneva. The same principles which led him in early life to exert himself in defence of the mixed Constitution of
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his native country, against aristocratic incroachments, on a late occasion induced him to take the same active part in resisting the attempt to substitute an unlimited democracy; and the same principles have made him a zealous admirer of the British Constitution. Division of power, and forms of government best adapted to national habits and local circumstances, are the foundations of his political opinions.

He began this work chiefly with an intention of introducing it where mistaken notions of the present situation, the political sentiments, and the constitution of this country, are at present entertained to a dangerous extent; and undoubtedly confirm our enemies in their opinion of our internal weakness, and induce them to persevere in a line of conduct which precludes reconciliation.

After he had made a considerable progress, he was on the point of giving up his design, from an apprehension that his plan was too comprehensive for a hasty publication. But the friend who has undertaken this translation, persuaded him not to decline a work for which he thought him qualified by various circumstances of an active, and, on many occasions, a political life; which have given him peculiar means of acquiring a melancholy knowledge of republican revolutions, and of the real views and intrigues of the leading factions in France.

To this edition a Postscript is added, containing observations on some recent transactions in France, which confirm the arguments in the former part of the work.

June 10, 1795.



TO THE AUTHOR

OF

REFLECTIONS ON PEACE.

LONDON.

M.....

A PAMPHLET has just been reprinted here, which every person of taste attributes to you, and which no one can read without respecting its author. Your wishes are for peace, and you would persuade the allied Powers not to scruple purchasing it by very important concessions. In your wishes all Europe will unite; but many, I believe, will think, with me, that the means which you propose for accomplishing them would be productive of the most dangerous consequences. It is consoling to see the milder affections still cherished in the bosom of one of the sexes, while every thought of the other seems bent on destruction; but yet, a great deal too much is at stake to allow its being sacrificed to the impatience of an excessive sensibility, whose triumph could only be preparatory to the bitterest regret.

I am too confident, perhaps, in entering the lists against one who unites the seduction of sentiment peculiar to her own sex, with a courage in her political remarks which might rather be expected in the other,

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and embellishes both with hereditary eloquence. But truth and facts are the best support of an argument, and will make up for any other disparity between the disputants.

My purpose I hope will not be mistaken. Indeed it will soon appear that we really have both the same object; for who is there so unfeeling as not anxiously to wish for peace? not indeed a suspicious and temporary suspension of war, disguised under that name; but a peace equitable and durable, more so than can possibly be obtained by any concessions on the part of the Allies.

Meaning to confine my observations to the actual situation, and the prospects of the contending Powers, I shall say nothing of the picture which you have sketched with so much spirit of the errors of the Coalition against France; but merely observe, that the view you exhibit of the errors committed by the combined Powers, will rather induce them to avoid such conduct in future, than tempt them to repeat it.

“ I could wish to think so (you may say); but, admitting that past errors do not necessarily lead to new disgrace, if you would interest us in the success of the Allies, we must first know exactly what use they will make of it. Will they again think of dismembering France, of compelling an unconditional submission to the ancient system, and chastising those who destroyed it? Will they again propose to bring back the emigrants in triumph to Paris, with their terrible train of vengeance, exclusive privileges, feudal rights, and partial taxation?”

All such ideas the events of the war have long since shewn to be visionary. For a long time the object has been to save Germany from being dismembered; and to prevent the aggrandisement, instead of attempting the partition, of France. The
object

object has been to compel it to give back its conquests, and to keep so destructive a torrent within its proper limits: and, as probably the happiness and peace of a century to come will principally depend on the equitable termination of the present contest, if the French cannot be conquered in the field, yet still the war should be continued till absolute want compels them to retire within their ancient boundaries.

You appear to believe that a *formal acknowledgement* of their Republic would remove all difficulties, dissipate their fears, and lead to a general restitution; and you think that the British Cabinet persists in wasting the blood and treasure of the nation, merely to save the Kings of Europe from the humiliation of such a declaration. Perhaps you have not heard that three months ago* Mr. Pitt himself moved and carried the following resolution in the House of Commons:

“ That, under the present circumstances, the House
 “ of Commons feels itself called upon to declare its
 “ determination firmly and steadily to support his
 “ Majesty in the vigorous prosecution of the present
 “ just and necessary war, as affording, at this time,
 “ the only reasonable expectation of permanent security and peace to this country: and that, for the
 “ attainment of these objects, this House relies with
 “ equal confidence on his Majesty’s intention to employ vigorously the force and resources of the
 “ country, in support of its essential interests; and on
 “ the desire uniformly manifested by his Majesty, to effect a pacification on just and honourable grounds,
 “ *with any Government in France, under whatever form,*
 “ which shall appear capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other
 “ countries.”

Such has been, and such still is, the language of Mr. Pitt. But though you have said a great deal of

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that

* January 26, 1795.

that Minister in your work, I shall say very little of him in mine. No one has less occasion for an officious defender than he; and I do not see the use of confining so general a question, and, when all other passions are so dangerously agitated, increasing the mischief by any personal reflections.

CHAPTER I.

Whether the War has really been more disastrous to the confederated Powers, than Neutrality would have been? Whether they ought to accede to any sort of Treaty, which would leave the French in possession of the smallest part of their Conquests? and whether the Chances of obtaining Restitution, and of ultimate Success in the present Contest, are not in favour of that Party which has the most permanent Resources?

BEFORE any discussion of the principal point in dispute, it will be convenient to disentangle it from some questions which have a tendency to perplex it.

I do not mean (any more than M——) *to go back to the origin of the war*, or to investigate its justice on the part of the two Princes who first united in support of monarchy in France: I am afraid there is but too much reason to believe that it has contributed to lead to the scaffold the King, whom they wished to confirm on his throne, and to make those very principles triumphant, which they intended to exterminate.

But, whatever may be thought of preceding circumstances, it cannot be denied that Great Britain did not join the confederacy, until the principles of Anarchy were triumphant in France; until that nation
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had avowed its project of disseminating them universally, and until it had actually commenced hostilities against States with which Great Britain had defensive alliances. In justice to the British Government, this circumstance ought not to be overlooked ; nor should we judge of *the policy of its conduct, by the bad success which has hitherto attended it* ; but by the actual situation of Europe, at the time when this country acceded to the confederacy ; when the people were generally taught to look upon the French Revolution as realising every airy vision of political happiness ; while in truth it menaced mankind with a far more dreadful scourge than that under which we now suffer. We should revert to the time when, in very many countries, the people seemed advancing, from admiration of the French theories, to an impatience for putting them in practice. If, at so dangerous a moment, there were Statesmen cool enough to resist the general enthusiasm, who foresaw the inevitable consequence of those theories, and, in order to prevent it, adopted the bold measure of drawing on their country towards an evil, distressing no doubt, but neither unusual, nor without remedy, with a view to save it from the irreparable mischief of revolutionary anarchy—Statesmen wise enough to rouse that popular zeal in defence of social order, which else might have been seduced to subvert it ; perhaps the gratitude of future ages will be in proportion to the courage with which they have dared to oppose the clamours of the day.

The Author of the *Reflections on Peace*, however, bitterly reproaches them for not knowing how to avoid the scourge of revolutionary principles, but by the scourge of war, instead of *lowering all their sails during the storm*. But before we decide whether it was best boldly to bear up against it, or to let the vessel drive before it, at the mercy of the waves, the bursting out of the storm should be considered. This
same

same writer calls it *a new æra*. It was indeed a time, when an unheard-of and most dangerous doctrine was zealously propagated with a sort of philosophic parade, which fascinated many even of the thinking part of the world; and when consequently it became the duty of those who foresaw the mischief, to give a contrary direction to popular enthusiasm. If this so-much-blamed war, for which the French gave such justifying provocation, or, if you insist upon it, so specious a pretence, has kept their neighbours under the restraint of law, prevented turbulence by giving employment, and strengthened the existing governments, by uniting in their defence those active spirits, which else might have been united for their destruction:—if, which is indisputable, this political pestilence has already cost France ten times more lives than all the nations of Europe together have lost, in defending themselves from it by war:—but beyond all other considerations, if the British Constitution has triumphed, and will descend unchanged to posterity;—I am convinced that future ages will look on the sacrifices of the present day, as *signal benefits*.—Bloody they are, no doubt, and calamitous; but infinitely less so than the *poisoned present* of the revolutionary system which the French have offered to the world.

If it is said that the nations which have not made such bloody sacrifices to internal tranquillity, have neither felt the mischiefs of war, nor been infected with this revolutionary contagion; I would ask what advantages those nations which are within the grasp of France have found, from a disposition to neutrality? Was it any security to Savoy, Holland, or the Palatinate? But waving what might be said respecting them, I wish to consider what has really been the situation of those other neutral States (so exclusively *fortunate*) to which the war has not reached, whose *wisdom and happiness* is so greatly extolled;

extolled ; and which are set up as patterns of the only line of conduct which the belligent Powers should have adopted, and as instances of the profound security which would have been the consequence.

Next to Denmark, the Author of the *Reflections on Peace* mentions Sweden, which, we are told, *owes its tranquillity to the system of neutrality adopted by the prudence of the Regent*. And yet, in the midst of this *tranquil Neutrality*, this very Regent has detected a *Conspiracy*, which he represents as *atrocious*, and as having put the *independence and the quiet of Sweden* in imminent danger. Is it forgotten that, in claiming from the Court of Naples, the person accused of contriving this conspiracy, the Regent of Sweden, in December 1793, represented that, *in this disastrous epoch, when Europe is agitated from one end to the other, the Courts of it ought to guard their common interests more vigilantly than ever ?* It is whimsical enough that the Regent of Sweden, so much praised for *not* having joined with the rest of Europe, to *guard vigilantly those common interests*, should actually have addressed this language to Naples, a Court which has made very considerable exertions in the common cause. It is still more so, that a Prince who can plead it as an *undeniable truth, that whoever protects traitors, exposes himself to become the victim of their attempts*, should be at the head of affairs in a country, which, if it has not actually given military assistance to the French Regicides, has at least, in very many other respects, contributed largely to their resources. But what is more strange than all is, that the kingdom, whose *tranquil neutrality* M—— extolls so much, is the only one which, during its Neutrality, has seen one of its Kings assassinated, and an *atrocious conspiracy* contrived against his successor.*

* I know that the whole of this conspiracy is not yet discovered, or at least has not been laid before the public: consequently

But at least, says M——, we must acknowledge that the *Americans* are enriching themselves by their neutrality. I admit it, and I am very far from blaming them; but if they profit by the losses of the Old World, what a risk have they not run of being torn in pieces by its Anarchy! Among them too the Convention has sent emissaries commissioned to drive, if possible, the Patriarch of the New World from his senatorial chair. They failed, indeed, in completing their infernal work; but they succeeded too well in kindling a civil war, and obliging parents to arm against their children; while, at most, the belligerent Powers of the Old World have only been obliged to arm against a foreign enemy. Who can conjecture what might have been the consequences of this civil war, if Washington had not been alive, to give energy to law, to unite and arm the body of American Proprietors, who, under his direction, readily submitted to the painful duty of a fatiguing march against their misguided countrymen? In America they found the necessity of pulling up by the roots these trees of pretended Liberty which French Anarchy was beginning to plant in its remotest forests. And yet we are coolly told *that the neutral States have been very far from imitating the example of the French!* and we are to infer, that a people separated from them by the Straits of Dover has been to blame for providing effectually against a contagion malignant enough to reach beyond the Atlantic! But when we see that France has repaid the sincere unarmed neutrality of the New World by instigating its inhabitants to political suicide, we may judge what would have been the fate of the governments in her vicinity, if they had

quently it is impossible to say, how much of it is imputable to French principles; but who is bold enough to affirm that it would have taken place, even though the Regent had put the nation into a state of defence? or to congratulate her on the tranquillity of her neutrality?

had remained unarmed and unprepared for resistance. Yet, by a strange injustice, though in England every seditious movement has been easily suppressed by a slight exertion of civil authority; and in America, neutral from interest and upon principle, the Government has been forced to raise on a sudden no less than 16000 men, to suppress an insurrection entirely owing to doctrines of anarchy disseminated by French emissaries; yet the British Cabinet, in the person of Mr. Pitt, is reproached *with having persuaded the people of property in England, that nothing but war could protect the Nation from the contagion of French politics.*

But (continues the author, page 8) has not Swisserland, at the very doors of the French Revolution, avoided its introduction, and escaped the horrors of war, by a prudent neutrality? No; it is certain that their disposition to maintain peace would not have saved them, but for the concurrence of some other very particular circumstances. A war was actually undertaken against them, notwithstanding their avowed neutrality, and they were at one time in the most imminent danger. The French Republic had sent positive orders to their General, Montesquiou, to invade Swisserland; but this was prevented, in the first instance, by the little State of Geneva, which adopted measures of resistance, and became a barrier between the army of the Alps and the Pays de Vaud, till the Helvetic Body had time to arm itself. The French General, too, had virtue enough to protract the execution of his orders, and succeeded in procuring them to be revoked; but not without determining to ruin himself rather than decline representing to his employers *the great injustice and the danger of the war which they were kindling.** And the

* " Let not France be dishonoured by an execrable abuse of power.
 " Will you suffer the infancy of a Republic on which the eyes of
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the revolution to which Geneva voluntarily submitted soon after, took away their pretence for invading Swisserland. The deplorable fate of that interesting city is but too generally known, as well as the iniquitous declaration in the Convention, which said, "*There must be a Revolution in Geneva, or our own must fail.*" We know that Swisserland, though by this time prepared for resistance, had no way of avoiding a war but by withdrawing its troops from the neighbourhood of Geneva, and leaving it to its fate; and we know, too, that the pretended crime of that city was having procured itself *to be included in the Helvetic Neutrality*, which, said Brissot, *is nothing but an ill-disguised accession to the Coalition of Princes.*†

Yet in sight of this unfortunate city, which the French have polluted, by every atrocity of their own Revolution—close to the gates of a city whose *Neutrality* was its crime, a philosophic writer reproaches other nations for not having trusted to a similar *Neutrality*!

I am, however, convinced, that nothing but the existing calamities of the war, could have led M—— to lose sight of the far more terrible calamities from which, in all probability, Europe has been preserved by it. Quite overjoyed to see the French Revolution all at once take so moderate a turn, M—— does not observe that it is the war, which, by exhausting that nation, has brought it so soon to an epoch when the principles which led to it have lost their attraction,
even

"the universe are fixed, to be polluted by the foul perfidy of Courts? Will you disgrace your darling country, by the scandalous repetition of the fable of the wolf and the lamb? Will it add to our honour, or to our power, to crush the feeblest of our neighbours, to violate the sacred rules of universal justice, and to plunge ourselves into an additional war?" See *A short Account of the late Revolution in Geneva, printed for Elmsley, Strand, 1795.*

† Report to the Convention in the name of the Diplomatic Committee, the 21st of December 1792, by Brissot.

even with the French themselves; and when they are as candid in avowing the disastrous consequences of those principles, as formerly they were zealous in trying to persuade other nations, that the adoption of them would renovate the world, and restore the golden age.

Indeed there is now no longer any danger that other nations will be tempted to drink this political poison, from which France at present feels such fatal effects. They need no other warning against it than the following frightful, but the salutary declaration of the very persons who, a few years since, were so anxious in recommending it.

*France, says Isnard, has been drenched with blood, and inundated with tears. The sovereignty of the Nation has been wronged; we have seen whole troops of victims dragged to the scaffold. Wretches! (addressing himself to a part of his colleagues) look at your clothes! they are still spotted with blood. Be grateful for the generosity which restrains me from displaying the immensity of your crimes.**

France!

* This member of the Convention has published a pamphlet, which (though meant to excite the public indignation against the faction of which he has been the victim) is really a most eloquent accusation of the Revolution itself, to which he so much contributed. Let other nations judge of that Revolution by the following picture drawn by a man who has been one of its authors, of its victims, and an eye-witness of what he describes.

“ A civil war excited; Robespierre elevated to a dictatorial throne; the Convention mutilated, debilitated, subjugated; the reign of terror established; the proconsulate introduced; every natural feeling stifled; freedom of action, of speech, and of the press, in chains; probity, virtue, and philosophy, proscribed; commerce, sciences, and arts, annihilated; Vandalism and robbery honoured; calumny and information rewarded; Maratism deified; the wealth of the public dilapidated; an agrarian system avowed; moral principle corrupted; the national faith violated; property invaded; numerous tribunals of blood instituted; the power of life and death delegated to the most ferocious of men; thousands of scaffolds erected; 50,000 Bastilles crammed with pretended
State-

France! (exclaimed Le Gendre, on the 24th of March) France is in ruins. Whichever way I look, what do I behold, but desolation and death! In the south I see the Rhone rolling its bloody waters to the Mediterranean! The public places in Paris have been covered with the dead! The cities of the south have been in flames! The north has been devastated and decimated by a ferocious savage! The Republic has been one vast Bastille, and tyranny has presided within these walls.

Terror (says Bailleul) subdued every soul, compressed the emotions of every heart. Terror was the strength of the Government; of such a government, that the numerous inhabitants of a vast territory seemed to have lost those qualities which distinguish men from brutes.

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state-prisoners; pestilence ravaging the prisons of the West; La Vendée encouraged; 100,000 victims beheaded, blown to pieces, or drowned; 300,000 defenders of the unity of the Convention outlawed with a stroke of the pen; 600,000 true republicans compelled to emigrate; millions of families, of widows, and of orphans, drowned in tears; whole departments put to the sword, and consumed by the flames; vast countries producing no other harvest but bones and briars; age massacred and burnt on its bed of pain; infancy murdered in the mother's womb; chastity violated in the moment of death; the monsters of the ocean fattened with human flesh; the Loire encumbered with carcases; the Rhone and the Soane changed into rivers of blood; Vaucluse, to a fountain of tears; Nantes, to a sepulchre; Paris, Arras, Bordeaux, Strasbourg, to slaughter-houses; Lyons in ruins; the South a desert; and France one vast theatre of horror, pillage, and murder."

Certainly it required the hand of a master to give so finished a sketch, in a few lines; and certainly no writer but a Frenchman would have omitted to add to this description, an account of the cause of so many horrors. The reader who wishes to know them may find them detailed in the third book of Thucydides, from which the above description is little else than an extract. He will observe that Thucydides, in giving a frightful picture of the evils which Greece suffered from an unlimited Democracy, positively declares that the same evils will constantly recur whenever an attempt is made to introduce a pure Democracy among a numerous people; wherever (to use the words of Freron) orators appear to recommend *the magnificent enterprize of forming a Democracy of 25 millions of men.*

They seemed to have no life but what their despots designed to allow them. Every man lost the consciousness of his own existence, and was a mere machine, coming, going, thinking, or not thinking, as he was impelled or animated by tyranny.

France (says Rovère) during the despotism of kings, was inhabited by courtiers and slaves: under the tyranny of Robespierre it contained only executioners and victims.

The history of the present Convention (says the Abbé Sieyes) may be divided into two epochs: during the first it was constantly enslaved by the people; during the second it was enslaved by Robespierre, by his accomplices, and by the different factions which have succeeded them.

It is a vain attempt (said Collot d'Herbois, on the 24th of March) to blot out your part from the History of the Revolution. The people seconded us all.

Tyranny has been exercised upon the people (says Saladin); terror has been the soul of the government. Prisons and scaffolds have covered the soil of France; and innocent blood has flowed in every part of it.

But listen to Barrere!—What has commanded these terrible measures? THE REVOLUTION. Through what medium? Through persons deputed by the people. Who executed those measures? The Revolutionary Committees. Who approved them? The Convention. Who superintended them? The Committee of General Safety. LIBERTY, like Victory, weeps over the evils she is compelled to be the cause of.

These dreadful confessions are extracted from the debates of the Convention itself. We observe, that the very men who make them, and who so candidly avow them, are unanimous in declaring that France is become a Hell. They only differ in the name of the Demon who has made it so. Rovère calls him Terror; Le Gendre calls him Robespierre; Collot d'Herbois, & Abbé Sieyes, name the Convention and the

the People; Barrere closes the list with openly accusing *Liberty and the Revolution*.

Undoubtedly these are reasons why an imitation of the French Revolution need no longer be dreaded: but if from these declarations, which so strongly indicate that France is verging towards a regular government, we are to conclude, that because the original object of the war is nearly attained, we should therefore immediately propose a peace, in order that the new leaders of the French may be in a situation to effect the reforms which are necessary; and that Europe may enjoy the quiet for which she has been fighting, and which she so anxiously desires;—To those who argue in this way I answer, that, in the first place, we ought to ascertain whether the new French leaders do sincerely wish for a general peace, and whether in fact they are not internally convinced that it will destroy their authority. But, besides that they have never yet expressed such a wish, even if they had expressed it, the only pledge we can have of the sincerity of such professions, will be an offer to make a complete restitution of their conquests.

This consideration leads to another not less important—Whether, even in that case, any engagements made by the Girondist party, who once more take the lead, can be depended on? The author of this pamphlet was one of those who negotiated and signed, on the part of Geneva, the first treaty made by the French Republic; and can give evidence from his own experience, how little the good faith of that Republic, or any engagement entered into by its Girondist leaders, can be trusted. This very Faction, after giving its Minister full powers to negotiate a treaty with the Genevese, waited till the latter had executed it on their part, and then coolly told them, *they ought to have been aware that the only admissible treaty was a communication of principles*. It remains to be considered (said Brissot in his report on this subject) *whether a free*

free people can or ought to bind itself by treaties ; whether they are not useless between Republics which ought to be guided by a community of principles ; and indecent with every other form of Government which does not derive its authority immediately from the People. On those questions depend the SECRET of your own Revolution, and of those which are PREPARING. §

Since we know that such principles as these induced the Girondist party, which at that time was all-powerful in France, to violate and annul the first treaty signed by the French Republic, *it remains perhaps to be considered* whether it would be wise to place implicit confidence in any new treaties which that party may now be disposed to enter into, with any Government which does not (in their opinion) *derive its authority immediately from the people.* Considering however that circumstances are now very much changed ; and aware too that their conduct may differ according to the

§ The practices of the French Republic to *prepare* a Revolution at Geneva are now no longer a *secret* ; and before we accede to the opinion that she may safely be treated with, the following series of facts which they offer should be considered.

1st, The present Convention refused to ratify a treaty with Geneva, made and signed in her name by a General invested with full powers for that purpose, and approved by the Ministers.

2dly, She pretended to give a colour for this abuse of power by decreeing the arrest of her Plenipotentiary, Montesquiou, though the Ministers declared that he had only acted according to their orders.

3dly, To give additional effect to this unexampled abuse of power, the Convention took care to wait till the treaty was not only ratified, but almost completely executed, on the part of Geneva ; and till the retreat of the Swiss troops which had advanced to their assistance left them destitute of defence.

4thly, The French Republic had no other object, in substituting negotiation for force, but to deceive and disarm the allies of Geneva ; and to put it out of their power to prevent that derangement of the social order established there, which she was determined to effect at any risk.

5thly, Her measures were disguised by solemn treaties, which there is proof she intended to violate, at the very moment she contracted

the magnitude of the object; I will admit that in the present state of things we may confide in the sincerity of the French Republic; but I still deny that we can rely on the solidity of any peace, unless she will guarantee it by a restitution of all her conquests; and I must add, that nothing less than such a restitution will restore the balance of power in Europe.

Whatever our new Preceptors may pretend, this balance of power is the salvation of Europe: it preserves its tranquillity, precisely in the same way that the balances of the British Constitution preserve the liberties of the people: it protects weak nations from the usurpations of powerful ones, and provides a general security against the abuse of strength in a general coalition to repress it. This admirable equipoise of the forces of Europe has now been for two centuries the palladium of her civilization. Formed by it into one extensive and wealthy confederation, she has been saved from the devastations of savage invaders.—It is only since the adoption of this system (accompanied and assisted by the Reformation) that barbarism has vanished from Europe. Like Greece during a similar equipoise among her Republics, she has since that

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tracted them; and which were violated only to bring about a Revolution in Geneva, more mischievous in its consequences than any that could have followed from war.

6thly, If for so inconsiderable an object as that of subverting the limited Democracy of Geneva, the Republic of France, while yet in her infancy, and previous to her victories, did not scruple to disgrace herself by an open violation of her first treaty, made with the weakest of her neighbours: then let that State which of all her neighbours is the most formidable to her, and whose constitution she has avowed it is essential to her interests to destroy; and which nevertheless is persuaded to disarm itself, and to rely on the faith of treaties—let that State first have some security, that the French Republic, under the government of the same party, though not with the same chiefs, will treat with more honour, and execute its treaties with more fidelity.

I repeat it, there is but one security which can be given for this, or which ought to be accepted; I mean, the immediate restitution of all her conquests,

period enjoyed in an eminent degree the blessings of social order, and protection from oppression; and has cultivated with unexampled success, the arts of which peace is the parent, and the sciences of which she is the nurse. Favoured by this system, the nations of Europe were hourly acquiring knowledge, freedom, and happiness, when this new philosophy appeared, to tell them that they were ignorant and superstitious slaves. It is nevertheless this equipoise of force that has given Europe such a decided superiority over the other two great divisions of the ancient world, which though in many respects more favoured by nature, yet will never emerge from their present abject condition, until some divisions of power are established among them; some federal system, adapted to their circumstances, which can secure them from conquest, and protect the independence of the weak from the violence of the strong.

Let us calculate, if possible, all the advantages which Europe has derived from this system since the treaty of Westphalia, and then estimate the miseries which she brought upon herself by neglecting it when Louis XIV. first began his enterprises. Can any one who considers the subject, believe that the war which ravaged almost all Europe about a century ago, would ever have taken place, if in 1667 (the period of the first attack by Louis XVI.) the parties to the treaty of Westphalia had understood their true interests well enough to see, that then was the moment to unite against the ambition of France? The exertions which might have effectually stopped Louis in the beginning of his career, and compelled him to retreat within his own territories, would have been nothing in comparison of the sacrifices which they were afterwards obliged to make, merely to prevent him from passing the new boundary to which his first enterprise enabled him to extend his dominions.

Who will deny that the French Republic is now what Louis XVI. was in 1667, with the same overbearing

bearing temper, the same thirst of dominion, the same passion for aggrandisement? Who does not shudder at the prospect of the torrents of blood which must flow for an age to come, if, by ceding to this military Republic any portion of its immense conquests, we intoxicate it with the ambitious desire of increasing them hereafter; or if we adopt the immoral policy of yielding at present, with the secret intention of renewing the contest at a more favourable opportunity?

The restitution of her conquests—of all of them without exception, must be the only basis of a solid peace; and now that the fury of the revolutionary storm is so much abated, the ultimate object of the war, an object which Europe and Great-Britain should never lose sight of, is to preserve in full force the confederation of Westphalia. I do not hesitate to say that if the greater part of the allied Powers should be pusillanimous enough to wish to purchase leave to retain what they have remaining, by finally abandoning what they have lost; still the solemn engagements of Great-Britain, her dignity, and her interest, require of her to exert all the authority which she derives from her preponderance in the alliance, in prevailing on them not to betray their own cause; and, under any circumstances, to employ her whole force in defending it.

But possibly her Allies, fatigued with the contest, may say, "If the French Republic persist in refusing to restore her conquests, must we have no alternative; but be obliged to allow her an opportunity of adding to them, by prolonging a war which has already given her so many provinces, and added so much to her resources for pursuing it with increasing success?"

As to her resources, they no longer exist, or, at any rate, must very soon be totally exhausted. It is upon this circumstance that Europe should fix its attention; for it inevitably leads to a complete restitution of the provinces which have been lost. At present the en-

thufiasm of her enemies is abated, and the war differs from former wars in thefe refpects only: 1ft, That the German States complain of being exhausted before they have fuffered a third part of what the feven-years war coft them; 2dly, That the French, by bringing into action the whole of their refources at once, and pushing on with their national impetuofity, have hitherto been irrefiftible; and 3dly, That as to the relative fituation of the conquerors and the conquered, the former are infinitely more exhausted than the latter.

If there be a political truth, which the hiftory of modern Europe puts out of all controverfy, it is this: that every war is now more or lefs a war of finance, invariably terminating to the difadvantage of that Power whose pecuniary refources are foonest exhausted. The great Frederic learned this axiom from his father, never loft fight of it, and owed to it all his fuccefs. If we read his works, we fhall find, that it was only by an admirable management of his revenues, and by his care to have always new refources in referve, that he was able to fupport, for feven fucceffive years, and at laft to terminate with glory, a conteft full of difafters, and during which his enemies overran the whole of his dominions. When at laft he obliged them to retreat, and to reftore all that they had taken from him, it was becaufe they felt an inability to perfift in the war, the neceffary confequence of exhausted refources; while, with a forefight which fecured fuccefs, the great abilities of Frederic had been directed as much to recruit his treafures as his armies.

It is true, that when the means of war altogether depended on the accumulation of treafure, its duration might be more eafily be calculated beforehand than now, that nations have difcovered the dangerous fecret of charging its expences on unborn generations,

rations, by additional debts. But still, if, in comparing the strength of contending Powers, we add to their existing resources, those which are derived from credit, we may foretell with sufficient certainty which of them will ultimately be the most powerful, and consequently which has the best reason to expect success from perseverance. In the present war, therefore, before a thought is admitted on the part of the Allies of buying a peace by sacrifices, which must necessarily render it insecure; before we give way to despondency, we should examine whether our antagonist is not much nearer the end of his treasures and his credit than we are; whether the distress resulting from this circumstance does not more than counterbalance any victory in the field; and whether, in spite of his wide-extended acquisitions, he is not on the point of being in a situation to say with Pyrrhus, *One victory more, and I am undone.*

An object then at present of the greatest importance, is to compare the military resources, or, which in truth is the same thing, the finances and the credit of France with those of Great Britain; for it is from such a comparison only that we can decide whether the latter ought to make any concession for the sake of peace.

CHAPTER II.

That at present the only Resource of France is her Assignats, on which even her future military exertions must exclusively depend; which are depreciating with a continually accelerating progression, and in a short time must inevitably be of no value whatever.

THE Author of the *Reflections on Peace* begins with the following bold assertion: "*The whole power of the French Revolution consists in the art of exciting popular enthusiasm, and directing it to political purposes.*" Page 1, line 1.

This (though assumed, and afterwards relied on as a fundamental proposition) I must deny without any hesitation. In the commencement of the Revolution it might be true, but has long since ceased to be so: for, admitting that popular enthusiasm, with liberty for its object, was the instrument employed to overturn the French Monarchy, and to repel the attempts of the Combined Powers to restore it; yet the republican system which succeeded it, could neither have been founded nor supported so long, but by a cause more simple, more durable, and more unremittingly active:—I mean self-interest, which has been stimulated by the invention of assignats. In them, and in them only, consists at present *all the power of the French Revolution*. It is by them that it has succeeded in bribing every personal consideration. By stipends to civil officers, who are every

every one preachers of the new-fashioned doctrines, it has succeeded in spreading them to every corner of France. Even its foreign conquests are merely to be attributed to the assignats, which have hitherto provided for 1,200,000 soldiers; and no doubt so extraordinary a number must necessarily have produced extraordinary effects. If the conquests of the French Republic have been three times as extensive as those of Louis XIV. it is because the assignats have enabled it to maintain armies three times as numerous.* What we have to consider is, whether the resources of France have not been wasted with infinitely greater profusion; and whether she is not, in this respect, on the eve of a catastrophe, proportionably more violent than that which she experienced in the beginning of this century; and whether she will be able much longer to delay this catastrophe, by delaying the total depreciation of her paper money.

So long as the assignats were issued in any sort of proportion to the confiscations which were pledged for them, they had a real value, and the project was greatly successful. But from the time that the Convention, intoxicated by a discovery so unexpected, and

* Of the truth of this we have the following confirmations in the Convention, by Cambon, Feb. 8, 1795.

The nation is under great obligations to the Constituent Assembly for the creation of assignats. This territorial money has very much assisted the Revolution, by bringing into circulation the value of the national domains, by enabling us to provision, equip, and maintain armies to the amount of 1200,000 men, to create fleets, to cultivate the lands for saltpetre! to manufacture arms, &c. &c.

This same Cambon, who remarked that a fifth part of the effective population of France had been engaged in the common defence, exclaimed on the 23d of November last, in this same Convention, *Some of my colleagues have said, that the economical system of Louis XIV. should be adopted; who, when he had to contend against a coalition of Powers, spent no more than 219 millions (9 millions sterl.) a year, while the expences of the present war are almost ten times as great; meaning to insinuate that the Convention squanders the wealth of the nation.*

and by means so immense, began to employ itself in contriving pretences for new wars, in order to bring them into action; when it began to work this rich mine, as if absolutely inexhaustible; every intelligent observer foresaw the rapid and complete depreciation of its produce. The calculation that nothing could prolong the existence of assignats beyond two or three years, has indeed proved erroneous; but it has proved so, merely because it was impossible to conjecture that such extraordinary means would be adopted for supporting them; and that Robespierre would come forward to prop them up, when tottering, by his two additional projects of spoliation and terror.

His process is well known. He began by a decree, which seized all the specie that could be found, of every sort, and paid for it with assignats. He then imposed the *Law of the Maximum*, and that of *Requisitions*; measures which, so long as they could be borne, gave this new money a forced circulation, and a pretended value. But as decrees so oppressive could not be enforced without having innumerable officers and informers,* to compel the people to submit to them, he met the difficulties resulting from this multiplication of expence, by contriving a new security for new emissions of assignats.

For this purpose the system of terror was adopted in its fullest extent, merely as a measure of finance, in which view Robespierre undoubtedly considered it; and such was the success of his horrible proscriptions, that

* The following extract from a speech of Cambon's, on the 4th of November, will give some idea of the expence incurred by Robespierre's system of terror.

A Government was formed which cost 591 millions (almost 25 millions sterling) annually, merely in inspection. Immediately the husbandmen and manufacturers left their usual occupations, which made them useful citizens, to become members of Revolutionary Committees, where they had nothing to do, and by which they enjoyed a sort of authority, and received five livres a day.

that in some instances the very same estates have actually been three times confiscated and sold again. The assignats issued were but a sort of bills of exchange, drawn on the Revolutionary Tribunal, and paid by the Guillotine, which Robespierre is said to have called *an engine for coining money*.

In this way, as soon as the inferior and subaltern robbers of their country were grown rich enough to be worth plundering, the Guillotine transferred their wealth to the State, and furnished the security wanted for new emissions of assignats: this sanguinary contrivance had the desired effect on the infatuated multitude, who imagined that their value would not alter, at least in the interior of the Republic, as long as they could find any demagogues to load with riches one day, and to plunder on the next. It was by this terrible round of confiscations, dilapidations of public wealth, executions, and emissions of new paper, that the credit of the assignats was supported for more than a year, and the Republic was actually enabled to provision her fourteen armies at a cheaper rate, though with paper money, than the Allies could their forces with specie. To produce this political miracle, cost Robespierre nothing more than a declaration that half the property of France was to change its owners by violent means.

However, those who were thus enriched, not finding themselves at all more secure than those who were suffered to retain their property, began of course to unite with them for the destruction of a tyrant equally dangerous to both: almost a year elapsed before the object could be gained; but at last he, in his turn, was dragged to execution; and by his death began a new epoch in the history of assignats.

Every preceding faction, however atrocious its measures, had been regularly supplanted by another proposing measures still more atrocious; but as it was impossible to go beyond Robespierre in
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cruelty, those who supplanted him had no way to secure themselves, but by promising to be more moderate; and particularly they found themselves obliged to begin with abolishing the law of the *Maximum*, and leaving the Guillotine which had supported it, without employment.

But though they could not but know that the suppression of the *maximum* must be fatal to the assignats, yet they never once dreamt of proposing a general peace; though it was the only measure which was likely to prevent further depreciation, by making further emissions unnecessary. They obstinately persisted in carrying on the war, though they were no longer able to fix the currency, or to keep up the value of the assignats, which they were obliged to issue for its expence.

From that time their relative value has fallen, and must continue to fall in the compound ratio of the depreciation of the existing mass (already much greater than can be brought into circulation), and of its continual augmentation. Nor is this all—for their depreciation is advancing with a rapidity continually and inevitably accelerated by this very simple circumstance, that the lower those which have been already issued fall in one month, to the greater nominal amount must new ones be issued in the next, in order to defray equal expences; and the Convention can only bear up against the effect of their present progressive diminution of value, by means which hasten their ruin. By increasing the quantity which they issue in one month, they condemn themselves to issue a still greater quantity in the next. I appeal, for the truth of this, to the last monthly report of their expenditure which we are acquainted with, that of *Nivose*, which, though by no means a time of general military operations, cost near eighteen millions of pounds sterling, almost twice as much as the month preceding.

preceding.* I appeal too to the care which the Members of the Convention have taken to double their own salaries, which was done the 13th of last January. The principle on which they did it is just; and indeed, as Cambon observed at the time, the same principle might have allowed them to increase the sum almost fourfold; because, even then, the assignats were at a discount of no less than 73 per cent. No wonder then that, ten days after, the Convention found itself obliged to decree the same augmentation of pay to those in all other civil employments; it is rather surprising, that it has hitherto refrained from doubling in the same way the pay of its fourteen armies; and it would be still more surprising, if it could avoid a progressive increase of all the salaries, according to the progressive depreciation of its paper money.

The law of the *maximum*, and its train of terrors, gave an artificial credit to the assignats; and of consequence, when the Convention was reduced to the necessity of taking away this only support of them, their fall was proportionably rapid. The people no sooner began to perceive this, than an unbounded spirit of jobbing shewed itself with respect to every sort of commodity, to every thing which could possibly be exchanged for paper; and this spirit has extended to every part of France, and to the lowest classes of society.† Goods of all sorts changing their owners almost every day and every hour, are each time sold for more and more assignats. Avarice cannot resist the

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tempta-

* I learn by the English newspapers, that the next month cost a third more than this of Nivose.

† Boissy d'Anglas represents this very forcibly to the Convention, in a speech of the 3d of March. *At a time when objects of commerce fail, and when requisitions, pre-emptions, arbitrary regulations of prices, and the absurd law of the maximum, have discouraged cultivation, the citizens are irresistibly led to speculations which occasion an unbounded desire of gain, and instead of commerce are mere gaming.*

temptation of selling, for perhaps 150 livres, what a few days before cost but 100; and yet these 150 livres are hardly in the pocket, before their value is so much fallen, as to make it an object to part with them again as soon as possible for something else, whose value will rise in proportion to their depreciation.

It is true, that in the neutral towns, and on the frontiers of France, the discredit of the assignats has by no means been so rapid as in the interior; but the reason is obvious. In those places they had before a regular exchange for specie, the course of which depended upon commercial opinion, uncontrouled by the *maximum*, or the *guillotine*; and instead of a forced value, they were previously subject to a discount which varied according to circumstances. But as the exchange of assignats on the frontiers is the only rule to estimate their former value, or to guess at their future discredit, it is enough to observe, that between the 24th of January, and the 24th of March, 1795, they fell one half in Swisserland; having been at a discount, which, during that period, progressively increased from 80 to 90 per cent.; so that, in the short space of two months, they fell from a fifth to a tenth only of their original value.

The consequence of this rapidly progressive depreciation must be obvious to every one; since there cannot be a doubt but, if they continue to fall at the rate of 50 per cent. every two months, in a very short time the assignats now in circulation will not be worth the trouble and expence of issuing them. But suppose this event can be delayed to the end of the present year, or even beyond it, in the present state of things it must inevitably happen; and when it does happen, I ask what possible resource the Republic will have for the preservation of its conquests, and the provision necessary for the numerous armies which maintain those conquests; and which no longer consist of volunteers and enthusiasts, but of forced levies, and
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mere disciplined mercenaries. Its only step must be to disband its armies before they mutiny for want of pay, to restore its conquests before the troops desert them, and offer a peace before they are compelled to sue for it from absolute necessity: so that a restitution of all the conquests made by the Republic, and a solid and lasting peace, must speedily be the consequence of the rapid and inevitable fall of the assignats, if the Allies will but have patience and steadiness enough to wait the event without relaxing their military exertions.

I say, *if the Allies have but steadiness enough to wait the event without relaxing their military exertions*; because it is evident that the progressive fall of the assignats arises principally from the necessity of issuing new ones. But since this necessity must continue as long as the war lasts, and must be urgent in proportion to the exertions which the French are obliged to counteract, it seems evident, that the annihilation of this, their only remaining resource for carrying on the war, or preserving their conquests, will be the sooner effected, in proportion as the co-operation of the Allied Powers is more active and persevering; and that every one of those Powers which withdraws itself from the confederation, postpones this total bankruptcy, in proportion as the Republic, by being able to lessen its expences, is in a lesser degree obliged to accelerate its own ruin by issuing new assignats. The defection, however, of some of the Allies can do no more than postpone this event, which it is impossible to avoid, but by a general peace, the only measure which can put an end to the necessity of new emissions; and till that necessity is at an end, no attempt to support the credit of the existing assignats can answer any purpose.

I know that, in reply to this reasoning, it will be said, that however seemingly well founded it may be, yet unhappily experience has constantly proved its fallaciousness;

sciousness ; since France, far from being obliged to relax her efforts, has hitherto from time to time found means to double them ; and has also doubled her triumphs, in consequence of this increasing exertion. But let us not lose sight of the circumstance that it is precisely this reduplication of her efforts which accelerates their termination. If those who considered this subject four years ago were mistaken in anticipating this event, it was because they could not possibly take into the calculation the desperate measures adopted by Robespierre ; measures, not at all tending to prevent it ; but only to make it ultimately more dreadful, in consequence of a temporary suspension. How could they have conjectured that the Convention would have had recourse to the law of the Maximum, which, as they own themselves, has *destroyed commerce, and annihilated agriculture* ? * A measure, which has *ruined industry, cheated the probity which was faithful to the laws, and enriched the criminal avidity which set them at defiance* ! † That they would have adopted *so senseless a system of legislation which made terror the order of the day, and encouraged stock-jobbing—a legislation, says Boissy d'Anglas, ‡ which enabled the Government to become the only merchant, farmer, and manufacturer, in the Republic ; which enabled it to exercise a tyranny absolutely unknown upon the earth ; and tending to universal annihilation of property, by the assassination of every man who possessed any.*

Who could have thought that the Guillotine would be able to introduce this violent law, which supported the assignats ; and to maintain it, by destroying indiscriminately the new possessors of property and the old ? or have anticipated the dying words of Danton, that, to prolong a little its frightful existence, *this*

* Breard, December 23, 1794.

† Echaffériaux, December 20, 1794.

‡ January 8, 1795.

this revolutionary monster would at last devour its own offspring? Who could have thought that an unheard-of circle of spoliations, kept in constant motion by the dreadful agency of terror, would be able so suddenly and so completely to enslave a warlike nation *which allowed itself to be menaced with the scaffold,** at the very moment when it was boasting of having broken its fetters?

I may be told that the calamities of war may possibly revive the system of terror; but this I positively deny. This infernal prodigy in the French Revolution never can be repeated; even the Nero of France, with his legion of executioners, did not make it last longer than fourteen months; and I am not afraid to assert that it would have been a thousand times more easy for him to have prolonged its existence another year, than for his successors, who owed their elevation to the abolition of it, to revive it for a single day.

I may also be told that Robespierre has left them an immense fund in the estates which, though already confiscated, have not hitherto been sold, and which are a sufficient security for new emissions of assignats. I know that such has been their boast, and that in the beginning of this year they had the assurance to assert that there remained security enough for 6 or 8 milliards (250 to 330 millions sterling) of new paper-money.

But we want no better proof of the falsehood of such an assertion than this, that, precisely at the time when it was made, the assignats began to fall more rapidly than ever. And besides, this immense security, even if it existed, could not cover such expences as those of the last two months, for more than a single year.

Having traced the history of assignats through the three first parts of it—1st, Their credit derived from

* *Réflexions sur la Paix*, p. 40.

from public confidence—2dly, Their reign by the influence of the *maximum* and of terror—and 3dly, Their discredit after the repeal of the *maximum*—it is now time to advert to the fourth Act of this Drama, beyond a doubt the most important, because it leads us to the catastrophe.

I have already said that Robespierre not having been able to support himself but by the utmost excesses of the most flagrant injustice, his successors had in fact no way of securing themselves but by absolutely opposite measures: of any such measures the safest for them was an union with the Federalists, whose faction, though it had been crushed and dispersed by Robespierre, was still both numerous and powerful. As a measure of party, nothing could be more prudent than this union; but it must be allowed too that nothing could be more destructive to the assignats: for it was clearly impossible for the then prevailing members of the Convention to procure the support of the Federalists, without restoring the vast possessions they had been deprived of.

The decree for this restitution did not pass without violent debates for several days. Duhem exclaimed, that *this first restitution would assassinate the country, and be a decree of counter-revolution*;† others announced that, in consequence of it, the assignats would lose the little value they still retained; and that *to restore the whole of their property to the families which had been plundered, would be to reduce the public wealth to nothing*. Public wealth, replied Boissy d'Anglas, *built on private poverty, is a barbarous sophism, invented in the ferocious den of the Jacobins, who have offered to your creditors as a security, estates which they well knew they had no right to mortgage*. At last, when one of the Deputies, alarmed at the measure, asked how they should pay the expences of the

† March 20, 1795.

the war. *We are not at present*, exclaimed Charrier, *to enquire how the expence of the war shall be paid, but to do justice. We are to prove to the people of other States, that the Convention does not massacre her victims for the sake of their wealth, as the governments† of those States wish them to believe.*

Induced by this eloquence, and by some respect for those principles of equity which it had so long trampled upon, at last, on the 20th of March, the Convention decreed a *suspension of sale*, as a preliminary step to a restitution of the property of all persons condemned by the revolutionary tribunals of Robespierre.

It was not however so much a returning sense of justice which occasioned this decree, as necessity, resulting from a multitude of irresistible causes, which continue to operate, and will, sooner or later, bring on the restitution of the property of at least one description of emigrants. § In fact, though this decree

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has

† The next note will shew that Boissy d'Anglas went further, and had candour enough to vindicate the Governments in question from this accusation of Charrier's.

§ If the crowd of unfortunate women, innocent victims of the French Revolution, who now drag on a miserable existence in foreign countries, and whose situation is one of the greatest scandals to the Convention, could present themselves, as the Federalists have done, at the bar of that Assembly, and say that the natural timidity of their sex made them instinctively foresee the atrocities of the Jacobins; that an Assembly which glories in having punished those atrocities, ought no longer to impute it to defenceless females as a crime, that they foresaw them sooner, and escaped from them by flight; that it ought not to retain their fortunes which have been confiscated, and from which the deputies receive a part of their salaries:—if compassion can influence that Assembly as party-prudence has done, I think so distressing a scene must move it to reply with one voice, in the animated language of Boissy d'Anglas, on the 20th of March:

We all know that the confiscations founded on the monstrous sentences passed by our late tyrants, are ROBBERIES; and that those ROBBERIES have plunged a hundred thousand innocent families in misery. The ghosts of the murdered hover about this hall; they call on you to restore to their widows, their brothers, and their children,
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has not been made more than six weeks,* we know already that it has been extended (and particularly at Lyons) to a number of families who were by no means of the Federalist party. How indeed can it be possible to revive the commerce of France, without recalling the merchants? And to what purpose will the merchants and manufacturers be recalled, without restoring to them the means of carrying on their employment?

Let it not be imagined that the Convention was taken by surprise, when they passed this important decree, and that, upon finding the total depreciation of the assignats attributed to it, that Assembly will be tempted to revoke it. They were perfectly well apprised beforehand of this, which had been predicted with much force, by Le Cointre, so long ago as the 10th of last December. *I now ask you, (said he to his colleagues) what will become of public credit, if you take but one step backward respecting property judicially confiscated, and applied to the use of the Republic?—What will become of the Finances?—In what a situation will you find yourselves?—Confidence will be at an end; and where in that case will you find purchasers?—If, with respect to the property in your hands, you but once look back-*

the property which they once possessed. Some have the assurance to say that this property is necessary for the people! People of France! rouse at once with indignation; reject with horror these bloody spoils; reject this shameful tribute: it is unworthy of you; it should make you shudder; it will make you accomplices of the monsters you are pursuing, of the robbers you have condemned! Let me ask, is not this just as much as to say to the people of France, Reject with horror the assignats? In fact, they should long since have been held in horror. It is not, however, sentiment, but self-interest, which will cause their rejection. The assignats have given birth to the war, and the war will be their destruction.

* Besides these restitutions, the Convention has already (on the 9th of November) passed a decree for taking off the sequestration from the property belonging to subjects of the Powers at war with France, and which has been valued at 25 millions of livres in specie. There were many persons who considered this property too as pledged for the assignats!

back wards!—but I check myself—I leave you to your reflections.

Surely the time when they were *looking forward* to these confiscations, was the time when Le Cointre should have awakened *the reflections* of his colleague Robespierre. It is not the decree of the 20th of March which has *destroyed the assignats*, by restoring *possessions that the State had no right to mortgage*, and which it could not possibly retain any longer: but it was Robespierre, who, acquiring those possessions by *robbery*, in order to have security for new assignats, and then wasting these new assignats to extend the conquests of the Republic—it was Robespierre *that decreed a Counter-revolution, and assassinated the Republic*: for at present I do not scruple to assert that it will perish, as the Monarchy perished, BY THE RUIN OF HER FINANCES.

It is to no purpose that the greater part of those who have succeeded Robespierre, persist in attempting to deceive their countrymen, and Europe;—to no purpose that they still talk of ten or twelve milliards (4 or 500 millions sterling) which they pretend the property of the emigrants will produce, and which, they would persuade the world, is a security enough to redeem all the assignats in existence, and all that they may have occasion to issue. They themselves well know that nothing can be more untrue; for by their own calculations it may be proved, that all the confiscations which remain unsold are really not worth a fourth part of such a sum.*

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Accordingly

* Johannot, who seems to have more integrity than any other person who has had the management of the Revolutionary finances, in his report on that subject, of the 22d of December, says, *Whatever their amount may be, yet the security for them is much greater. Accurate calculations prove that this security is more than 15 milliards (i. e. more than 625000,000 sterling). The yearly income of the national property which remains unsold, is about 300,000,000 (12,500,000 sterling), which, estimated at forty years purchase, the*
current

Accordingly Le Sage, Boissy d'Anglas, Cambaceres, La Reveilliere, and Thibault, begin to remove the veil

current price of that property, gives a real value of 12 milliards (500,000,000); which, with the estates not let, and the unproductive property, (both together at least worth two milliards) and one milliard which will revert to the nation by estates that would have descended to emigrants, form an actual value of 15 milliards (625,000,000). Never had any paper-money so solid a base!

When I undertake to measure *this base*, I presume I shall be allowed to lay out of the account the two milliards at which *estates not let, and unproductive property, are valued*; and to reason merely upon Johannot's assertion, that last December the amount of the annual income of the confiscated estates which were not sold, was about 300,000,000 (12,500,000). Now admitting this estimate as true, we have a tolerably accurate rule to value the capital of those 300,000,000 of income by, not in assignats, which soon will have no existence, but in specie.

Every one knows that formerly, in France, landed property sold from about 28 to 30 years purchase; and it will not be disputed, but that while so great a mass of it is in the market, it must be difficult to find buyers who will go beyond 25 years purchase in specie. But in fact, it will be impossible to find them at that price: 1st, because the rent itself is estimated by assignats; 2dly, because a great part of this property is in houses, which are every day falling to decay; 3dly, because we know, from the ingenuous confession of Cambon, on the 28th of February, *that estates are ruined if they remain in the hands of the Republic; and if sold, intriguers take care to be the best bidders, and, as soon as they get possession, sell the timber, strip the estate, and when the second payment should be made, the Nation is obliged to sell them again at the exorbitant loss occasioned by these dilapidations.*

We see then by these recent acknowledgements, that it is these *intriguing purchasers* which have enabled the Convention to boast of the enormous prices given for national property; and of which circumstance it has from time to time made such a parade; taking care however not to mention their being left on hand, and resold at an *exorbitant loss*.

I believe, when these circumstances are considered, no one will dispute with me, but that, if even the Republic should be settled, and all the confiscated estates should remain at her disposal, it will hardly be able to get more for them than even twenty years purchase in specie, if calculated upon the rent paid in assignats; a price which, in specie, it is now very improbable they can ever bring. But supposing it should be able to sell them at this price, the whole of them would not fetch more than 6 milliards (250 millions sterling). Now, from these 6 milliards in specie, for which at present we hypothe-

veil which has hitherto been used to hide the dreadful state of the French Finances.—*As to the security of your*

hypothetically admit that the estates let for 300,000,000 currency may be sold, we must in the first place deduct the immense restitutions made to the Federalists and others, conformably to the decree passed on the 20th of last March : and though, to lessen the opposition to this decree, those who proposed it, affected to assert that these restitutions would not amount to more than one milliard (41,666,666), I apprehend that the confiscations during the tyranny of Robespierre, may, without the least exaggeration, be computed at a third of the property which last December remained unsold ; particularly when we are informed by the latest newspapers from Paris, that, in the month of April, the Committee of Finance proposed *an absolute restitution of the property of all but the Emigrants* ; so that, after this deduction, only two-thirds of the whole sum, or 4 milliards, remain.

Out of these 4 milliards, must be paid the immense debts of the Emigrants, debts which *the State is charged with*, by a decree of the Convention, made January 1, 1795. And as Cambon declared at that time, that the Emigrants had not fewer than about *a million of creditors* ; and as the Committee of Finances has since estimated those debts at 1 milliard 800,000,000 of livres ; this will reduce what remains to the State to something more than two milliards.

With these two milliards, it has to pay all the assignats now in circulation ; and which, if Cambon may be believed, amounted to 6 milliards 400 millions, so long ago as the 4th of last November ; and which, notwithstanding some of them have since been taken out of circulation, yet, by the additions that have since been made, cannot now amount to less than 8 or 9 milliards. It has also to pay all the new assignats which must be issued as long as the war lasts : and who can calculate the amount to which, in consequence of depreciation, they must be issued by next December, if the French should delay the restitution of their conquests till that time ?

Besides all this, before the mass of assignats can be redeemed, provision ought to be made for the annuities purchased during the monarchy, which amount to about 100,000,000 a year (more than 4 millions sterling). Supposing this debt to be paid with a dash of the pen, yet it will not be quite so easy to strike out the great promises which have been made to a million of soldiers, for whom the Committee of Finance proposes to reserve a milliard, as the reward of their services. Nor is this all ; for a consideration more pressing than any even of these is, to repair what Echassieriaux calls the *ruins of agriculture*, and which will require immense and immediate advances.

Add to all this the necessary expences to carry on the government, even if the war were over, till the revenue can again be made

your assignats, says Le Sage, it is French integrity and the probity of the nation.—Boissy d'Anglas, who six weeks before had affirmed *that the assignats were undoubtedly a property of incontestable solidity, a debt of the Nation secured on the firmest basis,* suddenly changed his language in the Convention:—*Your assignats, said he on the 20th of March, are bills guaranteed by your integrity, resting much more on the credit which we have a right to, than on any other basis.* Ten days after this, Cambaceres tells the Convention, that, if it should dissolve itself, it would *leave the Finances exhausted.** *We must instantly, exclaims La Reveilliere, remedy the disorder of the finances, by means simple, equitable, and of immediate efficacy—If they perish, we must perish with them, and the State with us.*—And lastly, to crown all these alarming confessions, Thibault tells the Convention, on the 1st of April, *that there were three subjects which should never be publicly mentioned; they are, says he, the State of Provisions, Religion, and the Finances.*

Let their transient Republic continue then, if it will, to inscribe on its new assignats the pompous phrase of NATIONAL DOMAINS: no intelligent person can help substituting instead of it this alarming acknowledgement:—*Exhausted Finances!—Security overloaded!—Restitution begun!—New emissions of Paper!—and continued Depreciation!*

I presume a further explanation would be unnecessary, to shew the way in which each effect of this

con-

made productive, which at present, reduced as it is in nominal amount, is still more reduced by being paid in depreciated assignats, and I am confident is not equal to £.700,000 sterling in specie; and which, in the impoverished and depopulated state of France, cannot be brought near to the necessary expences, however economically it may be managed, without being infinitely more burdensome than four times that sum would have been before the Revolution.

Let the reader seriously consider the above statement, and I believe he will hardly subscribe to Johannot's assertion—"Never had paper money so solid a basis."

• March 6,

continued depreciation of assignats, becomes, in its turn, a cause accelerating their ruin, which must approach with increasing rapidity, that nothing can check but a general peace. I would willingly believe that the present leaders of the Revolution have more integrity than their predecessors; but, as I cannot believe that they have greater ability, I am convinced they cannot discover any other way of carrying on the war than by new emissions of depreciated assignats. I defy them to give any sort of permanent value to that immense mass which has been issued, but by a general peace; or to put off much longer the day when their people, wearied with misery, will compel them to abandon all projects of aggrandisement, and to sacrifice all their conquests, for so necessary an object; especially if Great-Britain will but honourably persist in rejecting any overture which does not propose a complete restitution of all the French conquests, as a preliminary article.

Some persons however, either interested in misrepresenting the question, or possibly deceived by the quackery of the French Committee of Finance, seem to imagine that some or other of the visionary schemes which that Committee either entertains, or wishes its constituents to entertain, may be practicable—schemes *which are to bring back the assignats into the public treasury by means purely voluntary.*

First then, as to the idea of Johannot, in a report of the 12th of last December, *that the value of the mortgaged property increases in exact proportion to the multiplication of assignats, and that it is to this constant inverted ratio between the value of the republican money, and that of the national property, that the French are indebted for those inexhaustible resources, which have astonished Europe, and have prepared the means of triumph for fourteen armies.* But I must deny that there has been such a *constant inverted ratio* between the fall of the assignats, and the rise in the price of national property. If this progression had existed at the time when Jo-

hannot

hannot made this report, assignats being then at a discount of about 75 per cent. or only a fourth of their first value, estates paid for in assignats would consequently have sold at four times the usual price : one, for instance, which at thirty years purchase, (the usual value before the war) would have sold for 1500l. in specie, would last December have sold for 6000l. in assignats. But in the same speech, he says, that the national domains sell at only forty years purchase ; so that, by his own acknowledgement, the value of estates had only risen a fourth, while that of assignats had fallen three fourths.

Possibly some persons may attribute this astonishing fall of the assignats, not to their want of a real value, but solely *to the quantity of this representative of wealth, multiplied in such a degree, as to destroy all proportion between it and the objects which it represents ;** so that, by diminishing their mass, and relieving the circulation from half of the existing assignats, the remaining half would recover their original value.

It is now five months since this object engaged the attention of the Committee of Finance, and that they declared such a diminution indispensable : but after having presented report upon report, and project upon project, all that they have really done, has been to increase the enormous mass of assignats, by forcing almost as many new ones into circulation as they purposed to withdraw from it. They have however suggested the following plans for their diminution, which possibly will not be thought quite so easy in practice as in speculation.

The first was, of either an *extraordinary loan*, or a *revolutionary tax* :† but as to the first of these measures,
Cambon,

* Speech of Echassériaux, December 20.

† As to the *civic and voluntary donations*, Cambon does not estimate the total amount at more than 20 millions (about 830,000l. sterling).

Cambon observed, that the losses by the law of the *maximum* had been too great to allow of entertaining such a project; and as to *revolutionary taxes*, he avowed ingenuously on the 3d of February, that the forced loan of about a milliard (about 41 millions sterling) had only produced between 180 and 200 millions (about 8 millions sterling). A strange defalcation, especially when we recollect that it was while the system of terror was in its full force!

A second project was a lottery of four milliards (about 165 millions sterling), which was to induce the holders of assignats to bring them into the public treasury, on receiving instead of them, in the shape of prizes, effects which the Republic found itself unable to sell in any other way. But then, said Cambon, *we must offer some premium*—and he calculated that by allowing 10 per cent. it would cost the nation 390 millions, and an annual interest of 131 millions.—A curious way of relieving the finances! Besides, whether as a lottery or as a tontine, the project is impossible; for either the purchase of tickets must be voluntary, in which case a security would be expected for their value, that does not exist; or else this resumption of assignats must be effected by force, and, far from improving the credit of any new emissions, would only be evidence of their fate.

The third of Cambon's projects was a *forced reduction of the nominal value of assignats*—But, said he, very candidly, if we arbitrarily reduce the value of those already in existence, what credit will the new emissions have? We should find it *absolutely impossible to carry on the war*.

Force, however, is by no means necessary to bring about this reduction of value. The *bankruptcy* is
G begun,

sterling). “ Every one knows (said he, the 24th of November) how what were called *voluntary donations* have in general been obtained. We cannot dissemble that the greater part of these pretended free gifts were the product of terror and constraint.”

begun, and wants no decree to complete it: the only difference is, that it will not be openly confessed, until the Convention finds, as it soon must find, its new assignats so entirely without value, that nobody will take them.

But as to Cambon's observation, that in this case the Republic will find it *impossible to carry on the war*—some persons imagine perhaps, that as the Convention must long since have foreseen the total depreciation of its paper-money, it must of course have made a provision for that event, out of the immense quantity of treasure which it procured by the pillage of the churches. With respect to this treasure, the Convention itself admits that it has been squandered with the same thoughtless profusion, as the paper-money; and Cambon declared on the 2d of November, that the whole of the plate taken from the churches, and of which Europe had heard such exaggerated accounts, *did not produce more than between 25 and 30 millions** (about 11 or 1200,000l. sterling).

Let us allow that this produce of sacrilege still remains hoarded up, yet it is not equivalent to the nominal expence of two days of the last month: but, since it is in specie, let us suppose it applied in discharging expences equivalent to those of Great-Britain: it may then last about fifteen days; and when that time is past, I ask once more—To what will the French Republic have recourse, in order to protract the war, and to defend its conquests? To its ancient abundant resources? Let us consider the state to which the Convention has reduced them.—What were those resources? *Its COMMERCE?*—*It has received a deadly blow*, says Boissy d'Anglas.*—Yes, adds Columbel, *we all agree that every thing has been done*
to

* The shrine of St. Genevieve, added he, the wealth of which was estimated so high, produced only 21,000 livres, (not quite £.900 sterling).

† Nivose.

to destroy commerce, and but too successfully.*—*Its MANUFACTURES?*—*They are annihilated; the workshops are deserted, and the workmen are driven from the country, says Echassieriaux.†—Its AGRICULTURE?*—Listen to Pellet—*The tree of reproduction is cut off at the roots.—Its CREDIT?*—*That credit to which, says Boissy d'Anglas, they have a right.* Where are the revenues on which it can now attempt to borrow? Considering the sort of half-confession of Cambon, I very much doubt whether the present receipts amount to more than 150 millions (6,250,000*l.* sterling); and in assignats, not very likely, I should suppose, to promise any great surplus to borrow upon. Besides, where will they find dupes to lend them, or indeed any monied men, connected with France, who have any thing left to lend, but assignats.

But to anticipate at once any speculations on the means which the French may be supposed to adopt for protracting the war—let us imagine, that by a stretch of authority the Convention actually reduces the nominal value of the assignats, or that the people, by general consent, agree to give up half or three-fourths of those in their hands, to retrieve the value of the remainder. Whatever resource might be found in such measures, after a general peace; yet, while the war continues, they would be useless: for nothing but a general peace can take away the necessity of new emissions: and besides, to propose such a measure to the French, in order to continue the war, would be modestly asking them to burn half their fortunes, only to give the Convention an opportunity of annihilating the remainder—exhausting the little life that is left, in grasping for a few months more Savoy and Belgium, and putting off for a short time longer the return of the Stadtholder.

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I think

* 29 December.

† 20 December.

I think I have said enough to prove that it is not possible for France to carry on a war of which aggrandisement is the only object, while the assignats, her means of carrying it on, are in such a state of depreciation; and equally impossible to prevent that depreciation, now that a system of moderation, adopted from absolute necessity, prevents plunder and confiscation adequate to the waste. With the annihilation of all their remaining value, which soon must happen, will vanish every remaining charm of the Revolution; and a political convulsion must follow, productive of consequences which at present can hardly be conjectured. Such a bankruptcy of the State will most sensibly affect all the poorer classes, and particularly the soldiers, whose absence has deprived them of the opportunity of employing their paper in purchasing lands at a low rate, and who, when they return, will find no public property remaining to divide among them, as they were promised. If their indignation at finding their paper fortunes of no sort of value, should induce them to require the annulling all the sales of estates which have been made by the Convention, and which the Jacobins at home have purchased for almost nothing, while they have been bleeding on the frontiers;—such a measure would be strictly equitable, and would give the means of allowing some indemnification, both to them, and to the former proprietors. But, as it would produce nothing towards carrying on a war; then, and possibly not till then, the illusion on that subject will cease. Her Revolution will then leave France nothing to contemplate, but the misery of her people, the ruins which cover her, and the madness with which her demagogues have wasted a resource, which, if prudently managed, would have effected and secured the duration of all the improvements in her government which she wanted. She will see their criminal absurdity, in having sacrificed such an immense resource to the

the phantoms of military glory, and territorial aggrandisement. But what is past cannot now be remedied; and of her present misery the only cure is *Peace*, and her only future hope *Economy*. These words every Frenchman will very soon substitute instead of *Conquest* and *Democracy*. Having experienced that the jealousy of wealth, and of cultivated understanding, which is inherent in a pure Democracy, makes it the most ignorant of all forms of government, while the multitude and the avidity of its agents makes it the most expensive, they will direct all their wishes towards one less burdensome, more simple in its arrangements, and more powerful in its protection; in short, they will fly for refuge to the arms of a Monarchy.

I do not deny that this concluding scene of the French Revolution may be more or less delayed by different measures, and particularly by a peace; but the proposition which I have undertaken to examine, does not relate to the termination of the Revolution, but to that of the War: whether, if it be protracted, any thing can possibly delay much longer the annihilation of the paper-money, which, on the part of the French, is its only support; and whether Great-Britain should lose sight of this circumstance.

The case of America, however, is seemingly an example which directly contradicts all these conclusions by the sure test of experience; and may possibly influence many opinions in this country.

Those who consider it as a case in point, will reply to me:—"Your calculations may be true, and the
 " assignats may fall to nothing, even sooner than is ex-
 " pected; and yet your conclusions may be false and
 " illusive. A similar illusion led us to persist in the
 " American war. At a great expence we persevered,
 " till at last the paper-money there was much more
 " depreciated than that of France has yet been, or
 " perhaps ever will be; and yet, at that very time, the
 " Con-

“ Congress was able to augment its forces, instead of
 “ diminishing them. To what purpose did we oppose
 “ our real to their artificial treasure? The 140
 “ millions which we spent, enabled us only to spin
 “ out the war, which the Americans carried on
 “ against us with increasing success. They sur-
 “ mounted all obstacles, made an advantageous
 “ peace; and now, that hardly twelve years have
 “ elapsed, their public credit is restored, their re-
 “ venues greatly exceed their expences, and their
 “ future prosperity seems incalculable.”

This representation is true, so far as it applies to
 America, and so far only; for between that country
 and France there is no sort of analogy. What re-
 semblance is there between America, engaged in a
 contest at home, by no means expensive, and in
 which all Europe was on her side; and France ob-
 stinately persisting in a foreign war, in which her
 finances are opposed by almost all the wealth of Eu-
 rope? What resemblance between a Congress, re-
 presenting property by the principal proprietors,
 supported gratuitously by the armies and fleets of
 France, Spain, and Holland, who made her cause
 their own—and the French Convention, a mob, ap-
 pointed by a mob; which, so far from having a single
 ally, has been obliged to spend very large sums in
 purchasing the inactivity of several of the governments
 which she had not provoked to take part against her?
 The Congress, when the depreciation of their paper
 currency made it requisite to negotiate foreign loans,
 had France and Holland ready to guarantee them,
 and immense tracts of unappropriated land to offer as
 a security; a property which, with some moderate
 taxes, has proved an ample fund for discharging their
 debt, and of course has raised it to its original value.
 But where are the persons who will now advance any
 money to the French Convention? Where are the
 Governments which will guarantee the repayment? and
 what

what is the security which it can offer? In her struggle for independence, America was not at one twelfth part of the expence of her antagonist; while France, on the contrary, spends at present eight or ten times as much as the whole Coalition against her. In America the expences both of her friends and her enemies increased very much her circulating specie; but in France gold and silver have almost vanished. Paper-money was indeed depreciated in America; but it was the provincial money which fell almost to nothing, and never recovered itself; while that issued by the Congress never lost three-fourths of its original value, and was restored to it by means of which France is wholly destitute.

But indeed what possible resemblance can be discovered between America, with resources constantly improving, even during the contest, by a reproduction of the necessaries of life, far greater than the consumption of her own people; resources directed all along by the same leaders, men previously practised in the arts of government, to one uniform object, and in a war at home—and France, with wants continually increasing, with reproduction greatly reduced, continually changing its leaders, and its arrangements; and fighting at a distance, merely for aggrandisement by conquests, much more expensive to preserve, than difficult to make?—What resemblance between the French, who have hardly advanced a step without some novelty in wickedness, and whose successes, by a natural consequence, give full scope to domestic strife; and the Americans whose union was cemented by danger, who regulated their conduct as much as possible by the established laws of civilized nations, and who were anxious not to disgrace their cause by the licentious ferocity of ravages?

Any comparison of the situation, resources, and the conduct of these two nations, proves that they resemble one another in nothing, but that each was distressed

distressed by a revolutionary struggle; which the one had means of bringing to a successful conclusion, of which the other is totally destitute. A contemplation of the progress of the American Revolution proves that paper money is not a permanent resource; and the circumstances attending that of France prove that, when her paper-money fails, she will find no substitute.

I cannot too often repeat that nothing short of this failure will convince the French of the absolute necessity of agreeing to a full restitution of their conquests. Whatever may be the military events of the war, this object will be obtained by the perseverance of the Allies; and upon it depends the only reasonable hope they now have of terminating it on equitable and safe conditions.

A Peace on such conditions, I consider as so inestimably valuable, and as so certain a reward of fortitude on their part, that even if we were to begin this campaign with the melancholy certainty that at the end of it there would be no material alteration in the military situation of the two armies,—yet still, no sacrifices should be spared, because no sacrifices can be too great, when the object is to drive back and confine within their own country these modern Goths and Vandals, who have already conceived the design of overrunning the rest of Europe. At present indeed they seem to have suspended their design; but the national character of the French will never allow them to relinquish it, if an example of disunion, and humiliating concession, should ever give them a prospect of success; and reduce the rest of Europe, either to the necessity of becoming their Allies, and thereby gradually falling into the deplorable situation of those islands which under that name submitted to the domineering insolence of the democracy of Athens; or of maintaining a perpetual state of warfare, in defence of their independence, against French violence and French intrigue.

CHAPTER III.

Of the pecuniary Resources of Great-Britain, her Revenue, her Commerce, her Taxes, her Debt, and her Credit.

IN attempting to form a conjecture of the probable issue of a war, merely from a view of the pecuniary resources of the contending Powers, it is not enough to shew that those of one of the parties are on the point of being totally exhausted, unless we also prove that those of its antagonist are in such a state as to enable it still to continue the contest.

To avoid any imputation of blending resources which may possibly be thought doubtful, with those which we can demonstrate to be real; in calculating the means which the Allies have of paying the future expences of the war, we will only take into the account those of Great-Britain, and will even suppose it possible that the whole of them must be furnished by her. It will hardly be denied but that, if money can be found, the allied Powers can furnish a military force sufficient to maintain a war of posts, at least till the impending distress of the French obliges them to retreat.— Now admitting that even the whole sum necessary for such a purpose, must be advanced by Great-Britain; and that, in consequence, she would be obliged to raise 25 millions sterling, per annum,

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during

during the continuance of the war; the circumstances which I am about to enumerate, will enable us to form a judgment how far she is competent to such an expence.

1st, The following is a Statement of her Commerce to the end of 1794.

Year 1794	Imports.	Exports.
1793	22,288,000	26,734,000
Excels of 1794 over 1793	19,256,000	20,390,000
Average of four years preceding 1794	3,032,000	6,344,000
Excels of 1794, over the average of 1791, 2, and 3	19,429,000	22,036,000
Average of the four last years of peace	2,859,000	4,698,000
Excels of 1794 over the last-mentioned average	19,070,000	21,774,000
	3,218,000	4,960,000

2dly, Her revenue in 1794, affected as it was by some temporary interruptions to the arrival of her trade, amounted to 16,385,000

The amount of her Peace expenditure, according to the latest careful and attentive investigation by a Committee of the House of Commons, in 1791, including the annual million, was 15,969,000

Add a sum now commonly set aside, in addition to the above million 200,000

Total Peace expenditure 16,169,000

Excels of Revenue in 1794, above a Peace expenditure 216,000

The

The wise and important provision, in the act of 1787, for consolidating all the funds and revenues of the country, which renders it necessary to lay before Parliament, the amount of all taxes imposed for paying the interest of money borrowed, has enabled us to ascertain, by the accounts laid before the House of Commons, that the income of the burdens laid upon the public, since that time, is more than sufficient to pay the charge incurred by new loans, and even to provide for the payment of the interest of the debt incurred, which is not funded.

In the above expenditure, it will be observed, is included the annual million applied by Mr. Pitt's bill, which passed in 1786; by the operation of which, with the application of an additional sum, as above stated also, since 1792, of 200,000*l.* together with the falling in of annuities, there was paid off, of the national debt, on the 5th of January 1795, 14,912,400*l.* of the capital; and the sum now annually applied for the reduction of the debt, is, in the whole, 1,965,992*l.* which will necessarily continue to increase from the interest of the debt paid off, annuities falling in, &c. &c. &c.

3dly, The nation, instead of being obliged to suspend the operations of this fund during the war, has not only found no difficulty in borrowing 33,500,000*l.* sterling, for that purpose, in the last three years; but has laid new taxes adequate to pay the interest of this new debt, and to augment the above fund in a due proportion to the augmentation of the debt, by an addition of 1 per cent. per ann. on every 100*l.* of capital created in conformity with the provisions contained in the act passed in 1792.—And though these new taxes are calculated as likely to produce the immense sum of 2,785,000*l.** per ann. yet, in no in-

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stance

* Of this sum, the taxes imposed in 1791 make a part, amounting to 635,000*l.* but they were then temporary, and were to cease on the payment of the sum then raised on Exchequer Bills, to defray the

stance have they excited less opposition or discontent.

4thly, The usual effect of war is, that while the consumption of national wealth increases, the springs are diminished by which the reservoir is replenished; and yet in the year 1794, the commercial balance in favour of Great-Britain amounted to 4,446,000*l.* no less than 2,704,000*l.* more than the average of the four prosperous years of peace, which immediately preceded the war.

Nor does this favourable commercial balance arise merely from the difference between exports and imports, each of which have diminished; but it is between exports and imports, each most rapidly increasing even under the pressure of the war. The exports of last year are 4,960,000*l.* greater than the average of the four years preceding the war; a demonstration that the internal activity of the kingdom is not materially affected by the war.—And the imports were 3,218,000*l.* more than during the same four years; a demonstration how little injury the French are able to do to the trade of Great-Britain, when compared with the advantage which it derives from their wilful annihilation of their own.

And this, notwithstanding such a number of men have been taken from their common employments, that her army is now greater than in any former period by more than eighty thousand men: and if unusual means have been adopted to procure sailors for her navy, it has been because the usual means have been less rigorously enforced, because the navy too is greater and more numerous than at any former period, and because the commerce continuing far more extensive than in any former war, necessarily retains a far greater number of sailors.

4thly,

the expence of the Spanish Armament: they were made perpetual in 1793 and 1794.—They would otherwise have ceased about the end of the present year.

4thly, Notwithstanding the increase of the debt, the addition of £.2,785,000 to the taxes since 1791, the immense current expences of the war, and its disasters* on the continent; yet now, in the third year of it, the stocks continue higher than they were at the same period of the last war with France; so that Mr. Pitt has made his loan at 1 per cent less interest, and on conditions in other respects more favourable, than that made by Lord North, in the corresponding period of the former war. Money too is so plenty, that the subscribers to this loan have taken an unusual advantage of the discount allowed, as on former occasions, for prompt payment, and advanced more than ten millions, soon after the deposit, instead of waiting to pay that sum by the regulated instalments.

This concise view of the present resources of Great-Britain, is drawn from well-known facts, and authentic accounts; and is, I imagine, quite enough to decide on her ability to continue the war as long as it can, by any possible means, be protracted by her enemy.

“ But what (it may be said) is all this to the purpose? Consider *how all the springs of the machine are strained*; † the whole is kept in motion merely by public credit, and that very credit is an instrument of public ruin: for it has
 cursed

* I speak of *disasters on the Continent*, because there only the war can with any propriety be called disastrous. At sea, the British navy has every where been triumphant. We made conquests from France in both the Indies, and have no where lost any territory. Corsica by our means has been emancipated from French domination, and has been assisted in adopting a form of government fitted to her circumstances. I do not call this a conquest from France; because no friend of freedom or justice can ever have considered a country so recently, so violently subjugated by that nation, as an integral part of its territory.

† *Reflections on Peace*, p. 30.

“ cursed Great-Britain with a national debt, a
 “ gulf which, instead of being filled up, is con-
 “ tinually growing wider and wider, and into
 “ which this vain nation is falling, which believes
 “ herself the richest in Europe, only because all
 “ Europe does not contain so much money as she
 “ owes herself.”

Nearly such as this was the language of Dr. Price at about the same period of the last war; and which has been so completely refuted by experience. These antiquated declamations on the national debt of Great-Britain, which are still so fashionable abroad among the partizans of the French, may be completely answered, by observing—1st, That she cannot be distressed by a sudden call upon her for the capital of the debt, because it is not demandable; 2dly, That effectual means have been provided for its extinction; and, 3dly, That the payment of the interest is perfectly secure. When we wish to ascertain which of two individuals is in the best circumstances, we do not limit ourselves to the observation that one of them has a mortgage on his estate, while that of the other is unencumbered; but if the first, after deducting the interest of his mortgage, has still the greater income, we can have no doubt that of the two he is the richer.

But another objection is fashionable with the same class of political arithmeticians, on the continent.—

“ If (say they) the taxes of Great-Britain, of which
 “ the produce has hitherto been adequate to her
 “ present debt, go on increasing continually in a
 “ proportion adequate to the increase of that debt;
 “ if, notwithstanding their present immense amount,
 “ they are added to year after year; they must at last
 “ become more insupportably heavy than those taxes
 “ which have occasioned insurrections in other
 “ countries; and can it be expected that the people
 “ will then so patiently submit to them? And,

“ besides,

“ besides, if this pretended public wealth results
 “ entirely from privations to which the individuals
 “ who compose the State must submit, the whole
 “ is merely a confusion of ideas.”

Either I am very much mistaken, or there is no other confusion than what results from mis-stating the argument; which may be easily put in a clearer point of view by considering, that the comparative burden of taxes on any families or nations, is not to be estimated by the sterling amount of the sums which they pay, but by the proportion which those sums respectively bear to the incomes which they derive from property or industry.

Let this rule be applied to the taxes paid by the people of Great-Britain; and it will be found that though their amount, when compared with the population, is perhaps greater than in any considerable country, Holland excepted, yet there is no country which supports its government almost entirely by public contributions,* where the burden is so lightly felt: the weight which sinks inferior animals to the earth, is hardly perceived when borne by the elephant. But, in fact, the people of Great-Britain feel less than any other the burden of taxation, for the following reasons: 1st, It is the only country where those who are poor pay less in proportion to their incomes than those who are rich. 2dly, This takes place in a wise gradation, from the lowest to the highest of the community; many taxes being assessed in an increasing ratio, regulated by circumstances which indicate a proportionate increase of wealth, and others being of a nature which confines their operation almost exclusively to the opulent. 3dly, There is no country where

* The words *which supports its government almost entirely by public contributions*, are introduced into the text, because in some countries the whole, and in others a great part, of the public expences are paid by the revenue of lands belonging to the State; for instance, the militia of Sweden, and almost the whole public expences of some of the Swiss Cantons.

where the mode of collecting them is so little vexatious, or the means of providing for the demand, so ready; in consequence of a facility in exchanging property, or procuring money on its credit, which in most other countries is unknown.† If these reasons are

† It may urged as an objection to my argument, that the great proprietors of Germany and Italy pay much less in proportion than those of the same class and description in England: but this objection does not meet my argument, and indeed proceeds upon a misapprehension of it. What I mean is, that it is not the positive weight borne by any individual in Great-Britain, that gives such an advantage to the system of taxation adopted in that country, over that which prevails in every other part of Europe; but it is the equity with which the public burden is distributed in proportion to the abilities of those who are to bear it.

This equitable principle of taxation is every year more and more attended to; and its operation is such, that there is good reason to believe, that the great labouring body of the community, whose expences, reckoned by families, are generally from twenty to thirty pounds a year, do not pay more to the State than at the rate of three per cent.—If we assume the next class as made up of those who, by families, expend from thirty to fifty pounds a year, and which includes the higher order of artizans, inferior farmers and tradesmen, &c. what they contribute may be averaged at about five or six per cent.—The rate of contribution goes on in a continually increasing progression to the highest classes, so that the families included in them, which if their revenue arises exclusively from real property, and they spend the whole of it, do not pay to the State less than from thirty to fifty per cent.

The effect of a wise distribution of taxes (provided the revenue derived from them returns to the community) is such, that they bear heavily on no individual, because a general circulation divides that revenue in such a way, that each man's income improves in proportion as he contributes. Not that this circumstance, which is true only to a certain extent, should operate as an encouragement to lay on additional burdens, or make Government indifferent as to the manner in which they are laid on; on the contrary, it must not be forgotten, that taxes, particularly when laid on the poor, diminish the means of reproduction, and consequently the resources of taxation, which it is of such importance to reserve for extraordinary emergencies.

This hypothesis, I am aware, involves a question of mere political economy, and may be more or less contested. But to return to the main question, whether those classes of society, which in Great-Britain bear the greatest share of the burden of taxes, are not able

are inconclusive, we must admit that the Savoyards, who, though the amount of their taxes, compared with their
 to support an increase of that burden, and even willing to do it : in answer to this question, I appeal to the following circumstances: That the taxes of the present session, amounting to 1,645,000l. sterling a year, fall almost exclusively on those classes, and yet no taxes ever met with less opposition: That the benevolent institutions supported by public subscription, which in this country are infinitely more numerous than in any other, indicate the wealth as well as the charitable disposition of the country, which was never more universal, or more abundant, than during the late severe winter. If the incomes of the rich were injuriously diminished, the inclination might have remained, but the means would have been wanting; whereas those contributions were so great, particularly in towns, that many persons think the poor were even better provided for, than in common winters, when they could work with more convenience.

As there can be no stronger proof of the opinion which they who support the greater part of the burden of the war, entertain of the necessity (under the present circumstances) of continuing it, than their cheerfully submitting to an addition of taxes, to the annual amount of 2,785,000l. imposed within the short space of three years; so there can hardly be a stronger proof of the wealth of this nation, and of the increase of that wealth, notwithstanding the war, than that scarce any of those works which increase the resources of a nation, by facilitating reproduction, such as canals, &c. &c. have either been suspended, or carried on with less activity, than before the war. The capital which the war has hitherto diverted out of its channel, is not that which is usually employed in increasing the wealth of a country, by facilitating the means of reproduction; but it is principally that which is usually spent in increasing the comforts, and adding to the elegancies of life.

But to return to the question, from which I perhaps appear to have been wandering: there are two other ways of determining whether the English nation, taken at large, is more or less taxed than others.

The first is, to compare the annual revenues of the inhabitants, with the sum which they pay to the State. Now, many political calculators estimate the annual reproduction of Great-Britain (meaning the whole income derived from lands, industry, and money) at nearly double the amount of that of France, in her days of prosperity; and they support this estimate by the circumstance that Great-Britain, after having supplied its own consumption, exported a surplus produce twice as great as that of France, which amounted only to about twelve millions sterling; whereas the exports of Great-Britain amounted, in 1792, to twenty-five millions sterling.

their population, was trifling; yet, comparing that amount with their poverty, were perhaps the most aggrieved by them of any people in Europe; that they must be considered as being taxed only one twelfth part as heavily as Great-Britain, because, in proportion to their number, their taxes were but one twelfth part as productive.

The only way of judging in what degree the taxes in any country are burdensome to the people, and to what extent they may be increased upon emergencies, is, first to ascertain the actual opulence of that country, and then investigate the sources of that opulence, in order to discover whether they are likely to become more abundant, and to be permanent. If such an investigation gives reason to believe that the opulence

of sterling. But let us even suppose the incomes of the two nations only equal; then, as the public revenue of France, before the revolution, amounted to about twenty-four millions sterling, and that of Great-Britain, before the war, to about sixteen millions, it is clear that the former, even admitting the incomes of the two kingdoms to be equal, paid $\frac{124}{100}$ while the latter paid no more than $\frac{16}{100}$. But admitting what was probably the fact, that the income of Great-Britain was double that of France, the sum actually raised upon the former, would be to that raised upon the latter, in the proportion of $\frac{8}{100}$ to $\frac{24}{100}$, that is, in proportion of one to three.

If this mode of comparison should appear uncertain, there is another more sure, and which leads to a conclusion still more favourable to Great-Britain; it is, to compare the sum she pays to Government, with the balance of her trade. Thus if Great-Britain in the year 1792, increased, I do not say her circulating specie, which is not to the purpose, but her productive capital, to the amount of 5,245,842l. sterling, by the balance of her foreign trade; this balance amounted to nearly one third of all that was paid to Government. And here another observation should be made, that this annual augmentation of the public wealth, increases the means of paying the public contributions in the succeeding year.

Next to England, France was the State whose commercial balance was the most favourable, and Necker supposed that it amounted annually to near three millions sterling: the French therefore had to add to the profit they derived from their foreign trade more than seven times its amount, in order to pay the public contributions, whereas Great-Britain has only to add twice as much,

Let the other nations of Europe, who talk of the heavy taxes of Great-Britain, submit their own to the same test.

of Gréat-Britain has increased in any period to a given extent, her inhabitants need not be alarmed, if at the end of that period they find her public burdens increased in a proportionate extent.

The value of the reproductions in Great-Britain, and of the accumulation of every species of wealth within her, has been for many years increasing with a rapidity which has refuted the presages of melancholy politicians, and excited the envy of her neighbours; and in such a situation, she ought not so much to be afraid of sacrifices which her prosperity enables her to make, as to be cautious, that neither the violence of her enemies, nor the indiscreet impatience of the advocates of immediate peace, succeed in depriving her of those sources from which her prosperity is derived. They are, at home, her agriculture and her manufactures, protected and encouraged by her Constitution; and abroad, her commerce, of which the balance of power in Europe is the shield.

Europe is the best market for her commerce; and her access to that market upon equal terms, as well as the opulence of those who trade with her in it, and which constitutes the value of it, depend, immediately, upon the tranquillity and independence of the nations which inhabit it; and ultimately, on the balance of power, by which that tranquillity and independence is essentially protected; so that the principal source of British opulence, that stream which fertilizes her fields, and moves the various mechanism of her mines, and manufactures, may be lost for ever, if she suffers the most formidable nation in Europe to increase an influence, always hostilely directed, by any augmentation of her territory; or by allowing her to retain any political ascendancy which she has gained by her present success. The culpable lassitude which could purchase peace on such conditions, would certainly be punished by a decay of foreign trade, and a diminution of internal wealth, as rapid as its late increase has been.

God forbid that I should ever become the advocate of war on any other occasion, but when the object is self-preservation!—No one is more persuaded that even a successful termination of a just and defensive war, is so far from adding to the prosperity of the conquerors, that it greatly counteracts it—cutting off with the present generation, and its comforts, the sources of future population, and future enjoyments; drenching the earth with tears and blood; and producing for the victors, as well as the vanquished, nothing but regret and repentance.* But surely the question is not whether the war is mischievous to Great-

* A political and military view of what wars of invasion have cost the aggressors since the balance of power has been attended to in Europe, would, if well done, be a valuable monitor to nations and princes. The most successful of them perhaps was that which gave the late King of Prussia possession of Silesia; an acquisition which, however, besides the original war of conquest, cost him a seven years devastation and depopulation of his paternal dominions; and which, after all, would hardly have been retained till this time, but for the particular interest which the Germanic body has in strengthening the second of its members in point of power, at the expence of the strongest.

And as to the French, though hitherto so successful, do they imagine that even if a peace should now be made with them, leaving them in possession of their conquests, it would be more durable, or that possession less destructively contested on the first opportunity, than that of Silesia was with Frederic? Do they think that the Princes from whom those conquests are made, and those to whom the power of France is an object of alarm, will not, on the first consciousness of returning strength on their part, and of debility on the part of their enemies, league together again to drive them back to their former boundary? How is it that they do not yet observe that the measures which they are pursuing can lead to nothing more than a peace in name; but, in fact, a mere jealous suspension of war; and that the perseverance of the British Government is a demonstration that the peace which it wishes for, is not a truce, a mere cessation of hostilities, till means can be found to renew them with greater advantage, but a peace which will be sincere and durable.

In fact, it is the ambition of territorial aggrandizement, that in-born passion of France, which at present induces her to detach, one by one, the Powers who are at war with her, by partial compromises. The leaders of that nation well know that the British Govern-

ment

Great-Britain; for no one can doubt it. Still less can it be a question whether peace is desirable; for

who
ment will never allow the territorial aggrandisement of France in a general Congress for Peace; and therefore their object is to secure the quiet possession of the conquests which they wish to retain, by previous and partial treaties.

If this be really their motive, let us examine the good policy of it. For the precarious possession of a few desolated provinces, the French condemn themselves to persist in a contest with the most formidable member of the league against them; to remain with harbours blocked up, provisions intercepted; and entangled in a species of war, for which, of all others, they are the most unfit; and for which, of all others, they have the fewest internal means of providing the materials, and consequently can derive the least assistance from their assignats.

They have not perhaps yet discovered that, in proportion as their plan of partial treaties is adopted, Great-Britain becomes relieved from the most burdensome part of the war. Once freed by the defection of her Allies from the obligation to make a common cause with them, she would be left free to exert all her force in the way most advantageous to herself. Though the iron frontier of France has proved impenetrable to the armies of Europe, yet her coasts are nowhere inaccessible. The distant possessions of France must inevitably become a permanent acquisition to Great-Britain: 1st, Because she would be under no obligation to restore them, as the condition of any restitution to be made by France; 2dly, Because the conquests once made, by ruining the trade, and consequently destroying the nursery of the marine of France, would deprive her of the means of ever regaining them; 3dly, Because those distant possessions having little or no influence on the balance of power in Europe, France would never be materially supported by the great Continental Powers in her attempt to regain them.

Another circumstance which they overlook, is the small value of their conquests, when compared with that of the possessions which in that case they must lose, the one not being in their full extent one-fourth part as valuable as the other. We find by the report of Johannot, made the 22d of December, that the returns from their colonies are now suspended, which by the same report amounted, in 1788, to 235 millions (9,791,666l. sterling).

Soon perhaps the Convention will find that their people will open their eyes to this circumstance, and the words of Mr. Necker, will every where be repeated. *What would be the consequence, if by neglecting such valuable possessions, or by losing them, France should find herself deprived of that balance of commerce, which she annually gains by exporting the produce of her colonies? What would be the consequence, if, besides this, she should be obliged to purchase from other nations,*

who is there wicked enough to deny it? But it is to promote the duration of peace, by preferring of two evils (to one or the other of which we are compelled to submit) that which will most effectually contribute to its solidity. And this question clearly hinges on the four points which I have attempted to examine. 1st, Whether the preservation of the sources of British prosperity, does not essentially depend on the equipoise, the independence, and the tranquillity of Europe? 2dly, Whether that equipoise will not be absolutely destroyed, and her independence and tranquillity be continually in danger, from the moment that France is left in possession of any part of her conquests? 3dly, Whether the near annihilation of the only resource which, during the war, she can make productive, does not give a better chance of depriving her of her conquests by perseverance? 4thly, Whether the resources of Great-Britain alone are not fully

nations, that part of their produce which she wants for her own consumption? Such a Revolution would send out of France annually more specie than she now receives. Administ. of Fin. Vol. II. ch. 3.

But the absurdity of the present leaders of the French, is not greater than the injustice with which the Author of *Reflections on Peace* reproaches Mr. Pitt with not being frightened at the very riches of Great-Britain, which have only been accumulated by the ruin of her Allies. p. 30.

If ever Great-Britain gave incontestable proofs of moral rectitude and disinterestedness, it is surely in the present war. I appeal to the sincere exertions she has made, and the lives and the treasure she has sacrificed to preserve Holland from the ruin to which France had devoted it. That ruin is consummated, and the French have sung their songs of triumph; but it will not be long ere they find out that they have done Great-Britain the most signal service; and that, by attacking the territory of the United Provinces, and getting possession of it, they have given her a double opportunity to do herself honour by defending her commercial rival sincerely, though unsuccessfully; and to enrich herself by the present suspension of the Dutch trade,—an advantage which the late alliance between the French and Batavian Republics will give the English a right to extend as far as possible; and which is certainly far more valuable than any pillage which the French have obtained under the name of *Requisitions*, or any ultimate profit which they can hope from the alliance they have dictated.

fully adequate to the expences of the war, during any probable calculation of its continuance; and whether their condition is such, as to give the French any shadow of reason for the hope which they so fondly cherish, of accomplishing their ruin, by protracting the war; a hope which has instigated a great part of their unprecedented exertions; and which now is the only probable cause of their apparent unwillingness to terminate the war, at least with Great-Britain.

I am aware that many persons on the Continent, who know no more of Great-Britain than what they read in the parliamentary debates, believe literally all the melancholy predictions of Opposition, and all those tales of misfortune, on which, as usual, so much stress is laid, whenever those who are adverse to the measures or the members of Administration, think proper to paint the disastrous effects of a war which they blame, and the immediate urgency of a peace which they recommend. Struck, no doubt, with the eloquence with which Mr. Fox has described the abyss into which the obstinacy of Administration is plunging this country, by prolonging so hopeless a war—the Author of *Reflections on Peace* brings him forward to corroborate *the evidence of the dangers* of every kind, internal as well as external, from which nothing but a peace can preserve Great-Britain.

So much respect is due to the authority of Mr. Fox, that I would readily let the opinion of the fidelity of my statement of the resources of Great-Britain rest on his testimony. I go farther:—if Mr. Fox had been at the head of administration, and it had been proved to him that the French were determined to retain any part of their conquests; that the leaders of the Convention do not desire a general peace, or at least that they do not wish for it but *by partial ones*; that if they no longer persist in declaring that they will not sign it *but on the ruins of the modern Carthage*, yet they still tell their countrymen *that the true guarantee of*

universal

*universal peace is to trace with a strong hand the limits of their Republic**; or, if the leaders of the Convention persist in maintaining that *Nature had decreed the Mediterranean shall belong to France*†—I very much doubt whether Mr. Fox would admit the authority of such a demarcation on one side *by Nature*, and on the other *with a strong hand* by the armies of France. I rather imagine that, if such a map of France were offered him for his signature, he would not have the least difficulty in affirming on his part, that, rather than submit to such terms, Great-Britain ought to continue her present expence for years to come; that she is able, and will be able to do so; and that she must not put the evils which she has already borne, or may still be obliged to bear, in competition with the far greater, though not so immediate evils which they enable her to avoid. I believe too, that, instead of fancying that *multiplied disasters would wear out Europe and England within a year*‡, Mr. Fox would exert all his talents to prevent those disasters, by doubling the military exertions of the country, if necessary; and would not consent to sheath the sword, until, holding it with *a strong hand*, he had *traced the limits of the French Republic*; that is, until he had deprived her of all her conquests, and destroyed her influence in Holland. I am led to this opinion by his decided approbation of the conduct of Mr. Pitt in 1787 for taking an active part, in concert with Prussia, against the Anti-Stadholderian party in Holland. He not only went so far as to call that party *usurpers*§; but he added, that

* See the speech of Cambacères, March 3, 1795.

† See Barrère's Speech, Aug. 20, 1794.

‡ *Reflections on Peace*, p. 23.

§ At the risk perhaps of being thought presumptuous, I will not dissemble that the conduct of the British Minister, on that occasion, has always appeared to me to be less distinguished by his usual wisdom and foresight, than any other of his measures.

It is not for having interfered in the Dutch Revolution that I think him to blame; for in that he was fully justified in the previous interference and absurd intrigues of that weak, but busy Minister,

that it was not an object with him to investigate scrupulously which of the two parties in Holland was

Minister, the Count de *Vergennes*, who took the same pains to carry Democracy to excess in Holland, as to crush the limited Democracy of Geneva. But did Great-Britain, after destroying the French interest in Holland, avail herself of her influence with the Dutch, as she might have done, to induce them to adopt a form of government better adapted to the interests of both nations? This I doubted long before the events which have lately happened, and which have changed those doubts to certainty. If I venture to explain my reasons now, it is because I think it cannot be long before the same circumstances will recur.

The greater part of the Dutch Patriots were men of real integrity. The object which they meant to gain was liberty; and they set out with very good intentions, but in a road of which they had very little knowledge. They complained of the authority of the Stadtholder as a yoke; and did not discover that if it was a yoke, the reason of its being so was because it was possessed of certain powers by no means suited to his situation as Supreme Chief, and which he might be tempted to misuse; while at the same time he was not allowed other prerogatives, much more essential to that situation, and which can only be employed to the public advantage. They exclaimed against Great-Britain, and accused her of meaning to make the House of Orange among them what the House of Hanover is here; and the prejudice of party hindered them from seeing that the greatest possible service which she could have rendered them, would have been precisely to have deserved this accusation, by inducing the Stadtholder to exchange his political powers, for the prerogatives of the British Kings, and persuading the people at large that the exchange would be for its advantage.

This inestimable use I have thought that the British Minister might possibly have made of the immense influence he had in the Revolution of 1787. That Revolution terminated only in the momentary defeat of a numerous party; whereas it might have ended in a solid improvement of the situation of the House of Orange, and of the people, satisfying almost equally both parties, and consolidating the connexion between the two countries.

So noble an enterprise would, no doubt, have been subject to many difficulties in the execution; but which might, I imagine, have been surmounted by judicious conduct, and lenient measures. The triumphant party was so completely under the influence of Great-Britain and Prussia, that it could not have resisted, even if it could be supposed so ignorant of its own interests as to have attempted it. As to the other party, it thought of nothing but escaping the consequences of defeat; and I am much deceived if those who composed it would not then have accepted the English

was most in the right. "It was sufficient for him
 "and for the House to consider which party in the
 "Republic of the United Provinces was most in-
 "clined to be friendly to Great Britain, and to
 "renew the natural alliance with this country."

He reminded the House "how repeatedly he
 "had urged the treachery of France in the exer-
 "tion of her influence in foreign States, even by
 "arguments which had frequently been thought too
 "strong;"—how often he had urged his apprehen-
 "sions of the views of aggrandisement entertained by
 her, of her perfidious system of politics, and her
 adroit perseverance in intriguing, to gain an influ-
 ence in the governments in her neighbourhood, and
 of the extreme danger of trusting to her professions
 of good faith. "As for him, (added he) he did not
 "wish to rest upon French declarations, or upon any
 "French professions, whether perfectly made, or
 "clearly expressed or not."

*On the present occasion, he gave his full assent to the
 address, which he considered as a public avowal from
 the Throne, and as public an acknowledgment on the
 part of that House, that those systems of politics,
 which had, at preceding periods, been called romantic,
 were serious systems, and such as it was the true interest
 of the country to be governed by; systems established on
 that sound and solid political maxim, that Great-Britain
 ought to look to the situation of affairs upon the Conti-
 nent, and to take such measures, upon every change*
 of

Constitution with transport. I am still more mistaken if that
 Constitution, once in activity, would have allowed itself to have
 been supplanted by the Tree of French Liberty.

However, another opportunity may soon offer. Heretofore the
 Hollanders have complained of the Stadtholderian Aristocracy;
 they have now experienced the far greater oppression of the Demo-
 cracy of 1795: now more than ever they may be disposed to unite
 in forming a rational Constitution, protecting them from both;
 and the best pattern they can imitate is the British Constitution,
 which it would have been still more easy to introduce in Holland
 than in France.

of circumstances abroad, as should tend best to preserve the balance of power in Europe. Upon that maxim he had founded all his political conduct; and convinced as he was of its justness, he should continue to adhere to it, and consequently could not withhold his ready and sincere assent to an address admitting the maxim so completely. It was now confessed by Government, that it was necessary to come to the lower orders of the people, those who were labouring under the heaviest burdens, those who paid for their candles, their windows, and all the various necessaries of life, and say—"Severely taxed as we know you are, you must nevertheless contribute something towards the expence of keeping political power upon a balance in Europe." This was open and manly; it was dictated by sound policy. Let therefore the expence of effecting and enforcing the late measures in the Republic of Holland have been what it might, he should think the money well laid out, and would give any assistance in his power to the voting it cheerfully and freely.

He had always thought it his duty, and the duty of every member of Parliament, to consider himself as the Representative of the people of Great Britain, and to attend to the interests of Britons, let them be where, in what country, and at what distance they might. *

Do the French flatter themselves that a Statesman who in 1787 held this language, will in 1795 come forward in their favour, either as Minister, or as an Englishman?† If Mr. Fox were now Minister, and the Author of the *Reflections on Peace* had advised him, instead of Mr. Pitt, to accelerate a pacification by noble sacrifices; had conjured him not to exhaust the nation in a retrograde struggle,‡ but to yield to the French as to one of those scourges in nature to which mankind submit

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from

* Vide Parliamentary Register, November 27, 1787.

† *Reflections on Peace*, p. vi.

‡ *Idem*, p. 9.

from necessity ; § I cannot help thinking that Mr. Fox, if in that situation, would reply, perhaps in that Author's own words—*England should consider the dangers of Europe as her own cause, and give up the absurd hope of continuing unshaken above the ruins of social order.* ||

No! I cannot be persuaded that if Mr. Fox were charged with the destiny of the British dominions, he would think it either honourable or prudent to desert the cause of the Allies, at least so long as they do not desert it themselves.

But were the advocate for peace to think of talking to him of *the contagion of French principles* in England, and of *those malcontents who in every country are the Allies of Revolution* ; ¶ Mr. Fox, who ought to know that the French provoked the war principally because they mistook the language of the Opposition for the language of revolution, must smile to find that so absurd a mistake still induces them to persevere in it. He knows, and has triumphed in saying it, that the British Constitution never gave such proofs of its strength and stability, as now, when the French Revolution has shaken almost all the rest of Europe. While, every where else, the former notions of government have been supplanted, or at least disturbed, the great body of Britons has, with a zeal and unanimity almost without example, shewn their veneration for the constitution of their ancestors, by their exertions in its defence. No one knows this better than Mr. Fox, who has constantly blamed the Associations for its protection, constantly affirmed that there was not even a shadow of danger, and that its strength might be exhausted by such unnecessary exertions ; many of whose friends have been patriots
enough

§ Reflections on Peace, p. 9.

|| Idem, p. 29.

¶ Idem, p. 8.

enough to suspend for the present their projects of reform, convinced that if some of the inhabitants of the edifice only suspected that the foundations were undermining, it was a sufficient reason for not busying themselves about its decorations.

The Author of *Reflections on Peace* insinuates that there may be other chances and other events in the course of the war, which may lead the inhabitants of the edifice to prefer a negociation with its enemies, *to the glory of being buried under its ruins.**

But what are these chances which await Great-Britain, if she prolongs this contest? What are these events beyond the reach of human foresight, and yet possibly within the reach of French exertions?—Is an invasion of this island meant? a scheme of landing here that *swarm of Frenchmen whose lives are not at all regarded,†* whom the Convention will turn adrift; here, under the fallacious hope of being joined by an immense number of partisans, but *with the real intention of exposing them to certain death?‡*

The Administration is preparing against such an event, as is their duty: but as to the danger of a descent, which no one here believes will happen; if ever the French should be wild enough to attempt it, and unfortunate enough to effect it, they may assure themselves beforehand, that they will not find here a sinking and distracted nation, as in Holland; that the same spirit which they themselves felt in the plains of Chalons, will unite the inhabitants of these islands, to a man, against any foreign invaders; and that the troops of republicans who will meet them, will be just as numerous as those vast bodies of royalists who waited for nothing but the appearance of the Duke of Brunswick to fly to his standard. If, from the Oak of Britain, a few leaves be shaken by the storm; if a

few

• *Reflections on Peace*, p. 31.

† *Idem*, p. 21.

‡ *Idem*, p. 37.

few friends, light as they, fall from the Constitution; yet its branches will not bend before the blast.—Any hurry which such a descent might occasion, would be the effect of animation, not of terror; every sword would fly to the place of danger as by polar attraction; every petty jealousy, every party distinction, would be extinguished; every man would devote himself for his country. A descent might possibly spread through some small district the devastation of barbarians: in a village or two the demons of discord might dance round their tree of anarchy; for a decade or two, the worshippers of God might be driven from his temples: but indignation would repel the invaders; the ocean would close upon them; children's children would listen to their crimes and to their fate; and the names of Frenchman, Anarchist, and Atheist, be united in detestation for ever.

There can be no danger which Britain need decline; there can be no sacrifices wanted which are beyond her ability to make: and will she then, herself secure, united, armed, and opulent, desert her Allies, and leave them impoverished, weakened, divided, and despoiled? Regard for herself and for Europe, even benevolence to future generations in France, obliges her to compel the present generation to renounce all its conquests. Love of peace obliges her to think of no other, than one which can be sincere and solid: I repeat it, and I think I have proved it, that such a peace can only be signed on the former frontiers of France.

Should some of the Allies, by the events of war, find themselves again on those frontiers; should they, elated by success, attempt once more to pass them, once more become invaders, and try to dictate laws to France;—should political writers again propose a war of subjugation, and talk of chasing the Monster

of Anarchy to his den!—then it may not be unseasonable to say that the mis-shapen edifice which has been raised on the ruins of law, of morals, and of religion, in France, can never be more effectually destroyed, than by those who built it; and that, by leaving them to themselves, we really leave them to the most dangerous enemies of their revolution. Then it will be seasonable to appeal to *lessons taught by an experiment*, which no one would wish to try over again. Then the wise and the truly pacific, in every country, will join in requesting the Author of *the Reflections on Peace*, to exert all his eloquence in supporting the cry of nations, and contributing to the triumph of humanity, by putting a stop to the effusion of blood. But till then, I conjure him and those who feel as he appears to do, to listen to the voice of reason, and reject the dangerous suggestions of impatience. On the energy and steadiness of the British character depends at this important moment the fate of the Christian world. The prudence which is recommended would be disgraceful pusillanimity. The peace which Great-Britain is solicited to purchase from France, by suffering her to retain but a portion of her conquests, would be a preparation for new wars in Europe, new invasions of Germany, and new taxes at home. Such a peace would entail on future generations, bloodshed and expence, beyond comparison more than can possibly now be wanted to bring this war (though at present so disastrous) to a safe and honourable conclusion.

CHAPTER IV.

Insurmountable Obstacles prevent France from remaining a Republic. It is of the utmost importance to her to avoid an elective Chief; and to return to a Monarchy, hereditary, but limited.

WILL the Republic, one, indivisible, and democratic, be established in France? Will that great political body divide itself into Cantons, confederated like Switzerland? Will it adopt an elective Chief like the United States of America? Will not the French go back to their Constitution of 1791? Will they not, when weary of change, seek a refuge in their former despotism? Will they not imitate the hereditary and limited Monarchy of Great-Britain?

The first of these questions is the only one on which I think we may, as yet, give a decided judgment; and if, with respect to that, I venture an opinion, after so many speculations have failed, it is because I am convinced that the third year of the French Republic has furnished *data* from which we can almost with certainty affirm that the curtain will soon drop before this Republican Drama.

Let it not be said that their language is as republican as ever; for, as to the French nation, what signifies the opinion of to-day, compared with the events which may change it to-morrow? Besides, I am very much deceived, if by this time there are not, even at

Paris, many more royalists, concealed under the disguise of republicans, than there were republicans four years ago under the disguise of royalists. I have for some time suspected that even the present leaders of the Convention are not so republican as they pretend; for if they were, they surely would not dream of extending the territory of France, already, beyond a doubt, so large as to be an insurmountable difficulty in the way of their system.

If those leaders were ever sincerely attached to that system, it could only be in the commencement of their revolutionary career; for the misery, the fears, and the personal dangers which those who survive of the Girondist faction have undergone, must have opened their eyes long before the public distress was great enough to open the eyes of the multitude. I would ask those Frenchmen of character and principle, who became Democrats only from exaggerated notions of human virtue,—do they still believe that the virtues and the talents which secure admiration and deference in private life, will be equally preeminent and commanding in a crowd? I would refer this question to the conscience of that member of the Convention who, about three months ago, once more solicited his colleagues to hasten the *magnificent enterprise of forming a Democracy of twenty-four millions of men*; or rather, I would decide it by that same member's eloquent descriptions in his discourse *on terror*. Every page of the history of every great Republic, will decide it; for there virtue is seen suffering and silenced, while the selfish passions only display themselves, and triumph.

One truth by this time the French ought to have learned in their school of adversity—that they have, in no respect whatever, the moral character which is indispensable for a popular government. To be fit for it, a nation must have education and moral habits unknown in France, and which can only be acquired

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by a long use of liberty; and in some degree even by its abuses. A republican ought to have that sort of discernment which can distinguish between faction and patriotism; between those who would agitate the people, and those who would protect them: he ought to have modesty enough to reverence the experience of age, and to give place on all occasions to superior talents. A republican government requires the strictest and most constant observation of social duties; it requires that parental and conjugal authority, that every domestic virtue, should come in aid of public force; it requires the moderated warmth which animates debate, and the wise circumspection which restrains it within due limits. A Republic, to support itself, must consist of a people which knows where to stop, when party degenerates into faction;—of a people austere in manners, grave in character, not hasty in giving its confidence, or changing its opinions; a people which has either the phlegm of the Dutch, the tardiness of the Swiss, the sagacity of Genoa, the prudence of Venice, or the information which America has derived from the English school of Liberty. If ever the French should attain to so many qualities foreign to their nature, it will be a most extraordinary metamorphosis; one which nothing can ever effect but the gradual operation of a free Monarchy. Let them however once enter that port, and I am convinced they will not leave it again, but to return in a very short time, as the English did, and moor in it for ever.

If they should be so fortunate as to secure themselves in that harbour, how much will they lament that they ever took the Republican Author of the *Social Contract* for their first guide to liberty, who, of all political writers, had least studied and least understood the nature of mixed monarchy, and representative governments? The latter, if we are to believe him, are derived from the *unjust and absurd system*

system of feudal government. The Sovereignty of the People cannot be represented; the People is not free but during the election of its representatives; as soon as they are elected, it is a slave, it is nothing.*

Here we see at once liberty confounded with authority, nor can this be wondered at in a man who considered liberty and tranquillity as incompatible. We shall soon observe that another erroneous assertion of the same writer, *Republics only possess Liberty*, arises from a similar confusion of Despotism and mixed Monarchy.

If, after commencing, in his Social Contract, by preferring small States to great ones, Rousseau had confined to the former, his advice to adopt the republican form of government as being the best for them, this would have been consistent.† But when, afterwards, with his mind always full of Sparta and Geneva, he states the *monarchical form as in every respect inferior to the Republican*; when he constantly recommends to great nations all those vexatious precautions which are the security of small ones, and endeavours to startle them at even the shadow of a supreme, hereditary chief; then he misapplies all his observations, and finds himself out of his sphere, for he is always wide of the question.

Kings, he says, always desire to be absolute. But have not Senates, National Assemblies, and any sort of popular bodies, the same desire? And when they

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* Admitting this to be true, what does it prove, but that even the worst forms are capable of being improved into the best by gradual correction?

† The only way in which the partisans of the Social Contract can defend its author, is by repeating what he says himself, that he did not wish for any but small States. But a work written with such an impression on his mind should rather have been called *a Manual for small States*, than *the Social Contract*. Such a restriction might possibly have prevented his disciples from undertaking *the magnificent enterprise of a Democracy of twenty-four millions.*

gain their point, is their domination less oppressive than that of an absolute Monarch?

So obvious a remark, one should have supposed, would have led Rousseau to examine seriously, to which the necessary powers of government may be confided, with the best means of preventing their abuse, whether to a King, a Senate, or the People? and to a still more important question—Whether the best way of preventing the abuse is not, to divide those powers between all three with a sort of equality? But such an enquiry might have brought Rousseau to the question of Free Monarchies,* of which he seems to have hardly suspected the existence.

Every one, he adds, knows what follows, when Kings employ substitutes. A thing much better known is, that Kings can never do without them; and when they try to do without them, it is so much the worse for their subjects. But what sort of political authority is there where they are not necessary? The people of France, that Nation of Kings! have not they too employed substitutes? have they been less numerous, more enlightened, less expensive, or more moderate, than those of their last unfortunate King?

There must then, he says, be intermediate orders; and consequently there must be Princes, Grandees, and Nobility.—And where is the great misfortune of this, while they form an impregnable barrier † between the King and the

* See the 8th chapter of the Social Contract, where he perpetually contrasts *free States* with *Monarchies*, and afterwards includes all the latter under the word *Despotism*.

† This is Rousseau's own expression in speaking of the English Peerage; and one would think, from it, that he understood its Constitution. Unfortunately it is in a romance that he introduces it, after having attacked it in his political works. In the sixty-second letter of his *New Eloisa*, Vol. I, he makes an English Peer say, "We are not the slaves of the Prince, but his friends; we are not the tyrants of the people, but its chiefs. Guardians of liberty, supporters of our country, and pillars of the throne, we form an insuperable barrier between the people and the King. Our first duty is to the nation; our second, to the Prince

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the People? while they can protect, but have no power to oppress; and while admission to them is open to those born in any other rank? Thus modified, they excite emulation, in a much greater degree than envy.

Rousseau continues—*A Minister of real merit in a Monarchy, is almost as rare as a fool at the head of a Republican Government.* With what degree of truth this applies to absolute Monarchies, it is not at present worth while to enquire; but if Rousseau had chosen to look to the British Monarchy, he might have seen, that a man of eminent and acknowledged merit, however obscure or low his birth, is almost as sure of rising to a high situation, as he would be sure of being excluded from it in the greater part of modern Republics; while, on the contrary, a man destitute of abilities, however high his rank, can never have much political consequence. Here we always see at the helm of administration, either the man whom public opinion

“ who governs it. We do not consult his will, but his prerogative. Supreme ministers of the laws in the House of Peers, and sometimes even Legislators, we do justice equally to the King and to the people; and we allow no one to say, *God and my sword, but God and my right.*”

Here we have a declamatory period, containing a great deal of truth, but certainly not accurately describing the parliamentary duties of the House of Peers; which are—in their judicial character to decide definitively on appeals; to sit as a Court of Justice on impeachments by the Commons; and on criminal prosecutions of any of their own members, upon the universal principle of English jurisprudence, that every man should be tried *by his Peers*. But their more common duties are, as Legislators, to frame bills of intended laws on any subject, not implicating in any way taxation, which are then referred to the House of Commons for amendment, approbation, or rejection; to examine, amend, reject, or approve bills originating in the Lower House. Rousseau's mistake consists in confounding the Parliament of Great-Britain with the French Parliaments, whose ordinary functions were those of Courts of Justice, and who were very seldom called upon to exercise any legislative power (if legislative power it could be called) by registering or refusing to register the King's edicts. Of them he might have truly said, that they were *supreme Ministers of the Laws, and sometimes Legislators.*

opinion ranks first in ability, or one whom it considers as equal or little inferior to the first: and the less favoured candidate cannot be considered as unfortunate, nor the State a sufferer: for though he does not direct the course and the ship, yet he watches the conduct of the pilot, with the jealous vigilance of a rival, and, if he can convict him of mismanagement, is sure to be put in his place.

Hereditary crowns (Rousseau still goes on) *expose a nation to have monsters and fools at its head.* Such an event is not impossible, and, I acknowledge, is distressing: but human wisdom cannot devise a better provision against this evil than the checks of a limited Monarchy. The great object of that system is, to give the State rather an ostensible than real chief; and to deposit in other hands, such an influence over his appointment of Ministers, that the nation may securely confide in their abilities; and, whatever benefit it may derive from his virtues, may have little or nothing to fear from his vices. And, not to mention the tempestuous interregnums where crowns are elective, if it be true that by that system a fool rarely sits on the throne, it is equally true that intrigue is the only way to it: intrigue almost always elevates to it some man of dangerous ambition; frequently some mean instrument of the enemies of his country, who raise him to the throne for the purpose of subjugating it.

Princes (Rousseau goes on) *are either men of narrow capacity, or bad principles, when they come to the throne, or the throne soon makes them so.* My answer to this new objection is the same as to a former one; that a limited Monarchy, foreseeing the possibility of these two cases, provides against the inconveniences of both. In fact, it provides so perfect a security against the immorality of the supreme Chief, that I should be almost disposed to be more apprehensive of his virtues if too splendid, than of his vices. With such a Con-

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stitution, let the crown be placed on the head of a woman, or a child, it is comparatively of little consequence, so it be placed somewhere, and previously settled. In truth, though the Monarch holds the sceptre, and in the choice of those whom he employs as his servants is under no legal restraint whatever, yet in the exercise of that choice he is necessarily so much swayed by prudential considerations, that he not unfrequently finds himself obliged to give up his own wishes in the nomination of his Ministers, and to be guided in it by preeminence of talents and public opinion.

We must then come to this conclusion, adds Rousseau; *we must declare that the King can do no wrong.* And what is there so alarming in this fiction (if it can be called a *fiction*), when effectual precautions have been taken to prevent his doing any wrong; when his subjects are better able to resist an attack, than he is to make it; and when he can do no act of government without his Ministers, and of course the whole responsibility falls upon them?

"If it be so," the partisans of the *Social Contract* will reply "where is the use of this regal pomp, and of the immense burden of a Civil List?" The answer may be contained in a very few words. To avoid civil wars, and reconcile what Rousseau considered as not to be reconciled, Liberty and Peace; to prevent the birth of ambition; to save the people from the terrible convulsions which a great State is exposed to, whenever the first place in its Government is vacant; to save it from a constant and violent succession of Syllas, Cromwells, and Robespierres.*

But

* One of the most anti-ministerial publications which has lately appeared in England, has the following passage: "I say, so fearless of misrepresentation; for my letters prove that I am no enemy to Kings, who are formed to give great assistance to an old government, in consequence of having a deep

But not to dwell any longer at present on the objections of the too eloquent Rousseau, I will refer his adherents to the work of his and my countryman, Mr. De Lolme—a work which cannot be too much valued, and which contains whatever the profoundest reasoning can add to those best of all possible proofs of the advantages of a limited Monarchy, the prosperity of the country which has adopted it, and the uninterrupted liberty and tranquillity of its inhabitants.

There is a book of another Genevan, not less valuable, and particularly adapted to the French; but which unfortunately did not reach them till they were no longer in a state to comprehend it. The book I mean is, a *Treatise on the Executive Power of great States*, by Mr. Necker.

Besides these, there is another work still more complete, and if possible better calculated for the present situation of France, where preservation is now not so much the object, as renovation: it is the *Defence of the American Constitutions*, by the celebrated Mr. Adams, the present Vice-President of the Congress of the United States. I do not know whether it has yet been translated; but if it has not, it would be doing a real

“ deep stake in it, and who, by pre-occupying the post of ambition, serve to quiet the attempts of all pretenders; for as to the expence of Kings, it is to be held as nothing to a great State, and especially if it is the price of tranquillity.” *Calm Observer*, p. xxxvii.

This author is perfectly right in the observation contained in the preceding sentence: in Great-Britain the whole civil list, considerable as the sum is, does not amount to more than one per cent. of the income of the people, computing it at the lowest rate; but, upon a much more probable conjecture, not to $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. And this is the only fair way of comparing the civil expences of any two countries. But that civil list is not (as many foreigners imagine, and as is sometimes insinuated at home) exclusively employed to support the majesty of the throne; but is strictly a civil, and not a royal list including the stipends of a very great number of persons in the service of the State, in offices without which no sort of government can exist; such as Judges, Secretaries, Ambassadors, &c. &c.

real service to the French, to give them an opportunity of reading it; because it will demonstrate to them that liberty cannot exist, but where the executive, legislative, and judicial powers, are altogether distinct; that at all events their preposterous union must be prevented; and that hitherto the British is the only Constitution which has succeeded in doing it.

Mr. Adams makes no secret, that the whole of his doctrine is derived from that source; * but he does not confine his support of it to the happy effects of that Constitution in Britain; he gives an abridged history of all the nations, ancient and modern, who have thought themselves free; and he proves, that whenever they have lost their liberty or their independence, it has been because they did not know how to associate Aristocracy with Democracy, or to place either of them under the protection of one supreme but limited Chief.

I need not say that by such a Chief, Mr. Adams does not mean, either that shadow of Royalty appointed by the French Constitution of 1791, a King in name, but in fact nothing more than an expensive and useless pensioner; nor the office of Stadtholder in Holland,

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land,

* " I contend (says Mr. Adams) that the English Constitution is, in theory, the most stupendous fabric of human invention, for the adjustment of the balance, and the prevention of its vibration; and that the Americans ought to be applauded, instead of censured, for imitating it as far as they have. Not the formation of languages, not the whole art of ship-building does more honour to the human understanding than this system of government. The Americans have not indeed imitated it, in giving a negative upon their Legislative to the Executive Power: in this respect their balances are incomplete, very much, I confess, to my mortification; in other respects they have some of them fallen short of perfection, by giving the choice of some militia officers, &c. &c. to the people; these are, however, small matters at present."

A Defence of the Constitutions and Government of the United States of America, by J. Adams, Vol. I. p. 70.

land, to which, in contradiction to common sense, no powers belong, but those which the people is most interested in reserving to itself, because it is able to exercise them itself without inconvenience. They have given the Stadtholder the right of appointing and removing the civil magistrates of the towns; but they have not allowed him any one of those powers for the exercise of which the office should have been constituted; such as to declare war, to make peace, to nominate Ambassadors, Generals, Judges, &c. to have a negative upon every proposal of a new law; and, if he sanctions it, to enforce its execution. Mr. Adams speaks of no Chief but one, decorated with these attributes of Royalty. Such a Chief may have the modest appellation of *President*, may be called *Stadtholder*, or *King*, or *Protector*, the name signifies nothing; the important object is, that he be invested with every prerogative of the Chief Magistrate of Great-Britain and of America: and who can tell whether Holland would have been conquered, or even attacked, if she had had a Chief to defend her, invested with similar authority?

What! (some of the French will say, with their usual air of triumph before victory) is the absurd institution of a single supreme Chief, reduced to find its best defenders in three *apostate* Republicans! The association is odd, and I agree that the idea may have some truth; but so much the worse for Republics properly so called, if whatever is odious in the terms of *apostate Republican* belongs to the latter word only; for the real or pretended *apostacy* of these three authors, proves nothing but that they have learned by experience a truth which Abbé Sieyès formerly boasted of having discovered by the mere force of meditation, when he said he had gone through Republics without finding them free, or at least without finding in them the union of Liberty and Law.

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This little digression I have been led to by a few words in the *Reflections on Peace*—If, says that Author, *the Moderate party triumphs; if in the Constitution of America a form of government can be found which is really applicable to France; the principles of universal justice, and the austere virtues of a Republic, will soon be established there.* By this remark the Author evidently means to recommend to France a Constitution perfectly similar to that of the American States. I know of no plan which they can adopt so likely to perpetuate their misfortunes, or which would at least protract them as long as such a system would be endured. I admit that there is the same reason for calling the American Republic a veiled Monarchy, as for calling the British Monarchy a disguised Republic; but I once more repeat, that the name is nothing to the purpose; for besides that this veiled Monarchy is elective, the numerous functions which the people exercise under their different Constitutions in the United States, are in no respect *applicable* at present to the French, who, in my opinion, are far from being ripe for the full exercise of the rights which belong to the people under the British Constitution. The time may come when they will be worthy of such a Constitution; but to qualify them for it will not certainly be the work of a day; and their progress must be like that of the English themselves,—from the rigour of an almost unlimited Monarchy, to a form of government in which the subject enjoys rights gradually acquired, and the Sovereign submits to restrictions gradually imposed.*

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* What enlightened friend of liberty would think of permitting the people of France to be present at the parliamentary debates, as the English are? In England no mischief arises from this indulgence, because the profoundest and most respectful silence is always observed; nor is their presence any restraint on the speakers. So completely, indeed, is it an indulgence, that any member whatever may, without consulting, and even contrary

How is it possible that a sensible writer could ever consider the institution of a Supreme Elective Chief as applicable to the French?—But the Americans find it so convenient! True; but their experiment is but of yesterday, and may be successful only so long as they have a Washington; and such men are phænomena as seldom seen in a Republic, as a Vespasian, or a Titus, in an absolute Monarchy. And no one will venture to predict that they will always have tranquil elections of respectable Chiefs; they may indeed, while they continue cool, poor,* industrious, and free from formidable and intriguing neighbours; my earnest wish is, that they may long be happy under a Republic.

Contrary to the wishes of the rest, order the galleries to be cleared. But were it possible for an equal number of Frenchmen to be silent, and to refrain from murmurs or applauses, yet the mere circumstance of their presence would intoxicate half their Senate; and the debates would soon degenerate into rhetorical declamations, addressed, not to the chair, but to the galleries, and more calculated to gain popularity than to serve the country.

Again, can any one think that the press, at present, should be as little restrained in France as it is in England? From the manner in which Marat employed it, and from the destructive influence it gave him, we may judge whether what is wholesome for one nation, will not be, perhaps, for many years, a poison to the other. The liberty of the French, at present, is like a spirituous liquor given for the first time to a young savage; the effect of it is madness: experience, however, and habit, will teach him how much he may drink of it, to raise his spirits and strength, without defeating his purpose.

* Mr. Adams, though he approves of an elective chief for America, in her present circumstances, as much as of an hereditary one for Great-Britain, seems to think, that at some future period the Americans will do well to substitute a King for a President. "In future ages," says he, "if the present States become great nations, rich, powerful, and luxurious, as well as numerous, their own feelings and good sense will dictate to them what to do: they will make transitions to a nearer resemblance of the British Constitution, by a fresh Convention, without the smallest interruption to liberty." But this will never become necessary, until great quantities of property shall get into few hands." P. 70 and 71.

Republican King like Washington, and that their elections may continue as peaceable and unanimous as his have been. It is a new experiment; and if it succeeds, will, no doubt, be one of the most brilliant events in the history of man. But reason revolts at the idea of an elective head for a Republic of Frenchmen; for a people who may produce many a genius like Voltaire, before it produces a Washington, or educates, or even discovers the merits of a man of modesty, foresight, circumspection, and moderation equal to his. But let the French above all things beware of an elective Chief! let them adopt any part of the American Constitution but that. Every election would revive their present convulsions, and condemn them, first to the divisions, and at last to the dreadful catastrophe of Poland.

What an idea is this!—recommending an elective Chief to the French; to that vain, inconstant, restless, impetuous nation, for ever fretting with self-love; where every one *feels it essential to his happiness to be above the rest*;^{*} and if he is not first in his own little circle, thinks himself the last, and feels injured, insulted, and debased. If there is in the world a nation absolutely incapable of acknowledging superior abilities (I do not mean by momentary and clamorous applause, but by lasting approbation), I maintain that it is the French.

Always violent in hatred and in affection, and equally inconstant in both; applauding without measure, and execrating without restraint; during the whole of their republican career, what sort of fidelity have they shewn to any of their leaders? The history of their Revolution marks their character more strongly than ever. The worshippers of their oppressors! the slaves of power! canonising to-day the monster of yesterday, and depositing his ashes in their
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* *Reflections on Peace*, p. 7.

sacrilegious Pantheon, that they may rake them up and give them to the winds to-morrow! consistent in nothing but their jealousy of authority, and their rapturous admiration of every demagogue who comes forward to throw down the idol which themselves have raised! Marat—Brissot—Robespierre—Barrere—what were all these but successive tyrants of France, who each improved upon the despotism of his predecessor, and each, during his momentary reign, ruled with unlimited sway, until some newer cruelty, some more ingenious system of oppression supplanted him?

Necker! the first object of their idolatry, a Minister of purity and integrity, virtues which his errors can never efface; what has been his lot? La Fayette; who never appeared in public without being applauded like a demi-god; him they reduced to the alternative of choosing between the cruel injustice of his present fate, and the fury of his fickle adorers at home. The demagogues who have succeeded each other so quickly that Paris itself can hardly reckon up their names; the shouts of applause with which their followers have constantly insulted them as they went to the place of execution—all prove what I have asserted. One demagogue indeed has died in the full possession of their favour—Marat! congenial *friend* of the *people* of Paris! And to one more only have they shewn any thing like fidelity, the only one whose popularity has lasted a twelvemonth, the only one whose fall his partisans endeavoured to prevent—Robespierre, who *decimated* the nation, and found out the art of conciliating their affections, while he ruled them with a rod of iron! and it is to a people such as this, that a periodical and free election of a supreme Chief is recommended! A people who can feel no severer punishment than to be obliged to make and elect governors from among their equals, and to avow their own inferiority by the acknowledgement of a superior from among themselves. *Such an avowal*

avowal as this, says the Author of Reflections, &c. is *not to be expected from the French*: by what inconceivable contradiction then can he imagine that the French will quietly repeat it every four years, by adopting the American Constitution, in which the Presidency is elective? Such an *avowal* will never be extorted from them but by the sword of the most fortunate candidate, or the gold of the foreign nations who may take an interest in the event. Austria or Great-Britain will influence the election at their pleasure, and the nation will be as far from independence as from tranquillity; nor will it ever secure either, till it restores royalty in a family whose superiority it has been habituated to acknowledge, but with restrictions which may limit, without too much reducing it.

Then, and not till then, the various struggles for superiority to which the revolution has given birth, if they are not quieted, will at least be limited in their object; for the place aimed at will no longer be the throne, but something by the side of it. Then the French, of their own accord, will return to their former habits of obedience as easily as a river which has been forced out of its channel returns to it when the obstacle is removed. They will again attach themselves without difficulty, and even with ardour, to a name which for so many centuries has commanded their respect, which flatters their vanity by recalling so many glorious events, and in their present frenzy occasionally excites, in the Convention itself, emotions of admiration and affection.* Their very treason against their late unfortunate Sovereign will increase their fidelity to his posterity. Never will the people
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* As a Frenchman, said Rhull, the 23d of April, in the Convention, I do myself honour in citing the memorable conduct of King John I. I move that honourable mention be made of it. Can we have proposed to renounce the immense succession of glory attached to the monarchy? Must we no longer be allowed to pronounce with respect the names of Louis XII. and Henry IV.?

feel the blessings of freedom, without recollecting that their King is descended from that patriot Monarch who first called himself a *citizen* of France, who sincerely desired to be the *restorer* of liberty, and was its *martyr*. Never will the vanity of Frenchmen cease to assume merit from the virtues of Henry IV. and if that vanity is become more irritable since it has tasted republican equality, it will the more easily console itself, because it then will only have to give place to what they will call *the accident of birth*, or *the chance of fortune*. Even mediocrity of talents in the reigning family will not be without its consolation: Montesquieu, with whose writings they are now so much dissatisfied, but who perfectly understood the character of his countrymen, seems to have had it in view when he says, *to elect by lot is a method which hurts the pride of nobody*.

The Polish nation, more than any other, resembles the French in impetuosity, in fickleness, inconsistency, party-spirit, and military courage. What have been the effects of elective monarchy in that country? A perpetual and bloody struggle between the great families, during which, though the people has acted with zeal, yet its interests have been constantly neglected; ambition has been sometimes gratified, but oftener disappointed; the country has been desolated; and the domination of Russia, first introduced under the disguise of protection, has at last been avowed by open subjugation.

What a singular contrast may some future historian draw, when he relates the events which have lately happened in Europe! "This period," he may say, "is remarkable for two dreadful events, equally unforeseen, and both of them injurious to liberty. The Poles, too late enlightened by the consequences of the destructive right of electing their Kings, made a noble effort to renounce the title of Republicans, which till then had been their
"pride."

" pride. Far from suffering themselves to be se-
 " duced by the political reveries of Rousseau, whose
 " dying advice to them was to attach themselves
 " more and more to their republican forms, and
 " never to give up the right of electing their supreme
 " chief; but reduce him, by little and little, to a
 " mere image of a King—far from being misled
 " by such suggestions, they at last begun to have
 " true notions of liberty, and directed their political
 " views to a Constitution approaching to that of
 " Great-Britain. Hardly was the standard of real
 " liberty raised among them, before all their scanda-
 " lous competitions were forgotten, and the proudest
 " of their aristocracy ranged themselves under the
 " banners of Kosciuszko, in defence of a Constitution
 " which controuled their own ambition, and was full of
 " happy prospects for the people. If in the enfeebled
 " state of that nation there was any thing like a hope
 " of success in their attempt to substitute a rational
 " Constitution for a turbulent Aristocracy and an
 " elective Monarchy, it certainly was the ability and
 " intrepid moderation of their leader. He failed in

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* " One thing in your customs shocks me," says Rousseau to
 the Poles, " and appears to me quite opposite to the genius of
 " your Constitution: it is, to see it so far suspended, and almost
 " annihilated, on the death of the King, as that all the tribunals
 " are shut up on that occasion; as if the administration of justice
 " depended so much on the life of the King, as that the death
 " of the one must be the destruction of the other. *It ought to*
 " *be exactly the reverse: on the death of the King every thing should*
 " *go on as if he were alive; one ought hardly to perceive that a*
 " *part of the machine is wanting, considering how little essential that*
 " *piece is to its solidity.*" *Gouvernement de Pologne, Chap. xvi.*

How many absurdities are contained in these few lines!
Royalty, in Rousseau's opinion, is *little essential*, even to a large
 political machine! Was it his intention, in advising the Poles
 to retain it in their government, to teach them how to do with-
 out it, or to consider it as dangerous?

In pointing out this strange mistake of Rousseau, in his work on
 Poland, it would be great injustice not to acknowledge the high
 merit

“ the attempt, and the independence of his country
 “ did not out-live his captivity. The Polish nation
 “ is extinct; but the last page of her annals is the
 “ most honourable; for no people ever shewed them-
 “ selves more worthy of independence than they did
 “ at the very moment when they lost it; and from
 “ the struggle they made to preserve it, posterity may
 “ infer the use they would have made of it.

“ In this glorious effort the Poles had but one
 “ avowed ally; and, will it be credited? that ally
 “ was France! France, who was at that time em-
 “ ployed in destroying her own hereditary and pro-
 “ sperous monarchy, and endeavouring to establish on
 “ its ruins the competition of equals, and to kindle
 “ the very passions which Poland was endeavouring
 “ to extinguish! The latter wished to preserve no-
 “ bility, and to make the monarchy hereditary; the
 “ former overturned an hereditary throne, and de-
 “ stroyed the nobility which supported it. The
 “ Poles were anxious for a limited government, re-
 “ sembling the British Constitution; the French
 “ never

merit of almost all the rest of that work. I consider it, if I may be allowed the expression, as the best antidote to his Social Contract. In the latter, Rousseau was wandering in an ideal world; but afterwards his political judgment was matured, and his information on the subject became much more extensive. Observe how cautiously, in his former work, he passes by all his abstract principles, or at least with what uncommon prudence he modifies them, so as to adapt them to the circumstances of the Poles. Preserve every thing, he says to them, overturn nothing; correct at first only that which essentially wants correction, and that which will enable you gradually to improve the rest. Let the French meditate on that excellent work, and then ask themselves what would have been the author's advice to them, if he had been called upon to give to their nation, as well as to the Poles, instructions for a new Constitution.

If this political writer, whose eloquence has given him such an influence over the opinions of the age, had but lived long enough in England to observe the practical effects of her Constitution, how much might it have contributed to introduce true liberty on the Continent?

" never spoke of that Constitution but with the disdain which usually accompanies ignorance, and " rejected every attempt to introduce it."

This striking contrast the French either will not, or cannot observe. But, instead of advising them to imitate America, the friends of social order would do better to direct their attention to the annals of Poland; and endeavour to convince them that liberty does not depend on making the laws and the rulers of a nation subject to the people, but in making the people and their rulers subject to law; and that, in a great nation, a limited monarchy is the only way to unite liberty with authority; for a vacancy of the first place in any government is a source of inevitable competition, discord, and civil war.

After having refuted the opinion of Rousseau in favour of elective monarchies, I ought not to omit, that attached as he was to a republican government, yet it would have been the last of systems which he would have recommended to the French; knowing, as he did, the capricious levity of their character; and always asserting, as he did, that republican liberty cannot be maintained but by austere manners, and the most rigid virtue.

How much it is to be regretted that he could not foresee that the French would be the first to adopt his principles! that they would be the first to put themselves under the *heavy yoke* of a Republican Government! and that, with a view to realise his fanciful theories, they would, with their usual inconsiderate levity, take upon them a burden under the weight of which they have sunk! And how much it is to be regretted that he cannot now take a view of the nation which, for these last four years, has been raising altars to his system!

How would it revive the contempt which he always had for the Parisians, if he were to hear them

call themselves his disciples? No doubt, he would exclaim with indignation, "Observe that people of children! that mob of pretended philosophers! that seminary of mutiny! No sooner can they abandon themselves to a spirit of faction, than they give it the sacred name of Liberty. Its representatives are but conspirators, and they call themselves a Senate; just as they give the name of *laws* to their numerous and bloody proscriptions! Senseless people! *They wish to be free, and yet know not how to be just!*" No sooner did they see their beneficent King perish on the scaffold, than they cried in their delirium, 'Thank heaven! we are now Republicans! it was time.'—Republicans!—yes, just as, after having discovered a way of robbing themselves, they became, in their own opinion, the richest nation of the universe. When, afterwards, misconduct and misery reduced them to the coarsest fare, then they fancied themselves Spartans! 'This,' they cried, '*is the black broth of Lycurgus*, and now we are true Spartans.'—Spartans!—I only wait the day when they will again be scourged by a lieutenant of the police—with what transports will they cry, 'At last we breathe again; we are once more Frenchmen!'"

I own I am very far from agreeing with those who imagine that they can ever again be Frenchmen in that sense of the word. Whether they will be better or worse, I cannot say; but I am as much convinced that they can never be compelled to submit again patiently to the old system, as I am that they will not continue to submit to their new one. The seeds of Liberty are universally planted; their growth may be checked,

† These are Abbé Sieyès' words: he applied them to the Constituent Assembly, when it seized the lands of the Clergy. And this is the man who has a leading influence in the present Convention, which has robbed them of half the stipends that the Assembly suffered them to enjoy, and has completely stripped, not only the family of Bourbon, but 3 or 400,000 families besides!

checked, but cannot be eradicated. The first productions may be harsh and unfit for the use of man; but a better sort may be grafted, may become habituated to the climate; and, in a course of time, they may taste the blessings of cultivated Liberty.

Sooner or later the French must be free, but I would by no means pretend to fix the time. Their quarrels, their reconciliations, their dislikes, their caresses, every thing is so sudden and so violent, that, ere we can guess what they will do in any instance, we find they have done it. Who would have ventured to foretell that they would oblige Louis XVI. to swear to a Constitution before it was made? that the very steps to the altar of Confederation on which he took that oath, would have led him to the scaffold; and that the Judges who condemned him for infringing that Constitution, would themselves trample it under foot amid the acclamations of the very people who once affected to be enthusiasts in its favour? At the time when Robespierre triumphed over the Federalists, and thought that he had put all their leaders to death, who would have thought that Federalism would again raise its head in the very Convention which had proscribed it? Who could have foreseen that the intrepid Charette would have ranged himself under the banners of the regicides; or that they would have proclaimed him Lieutenant-General of La Vendée? And yet all these events are but of yesterday; and since we can no longer doubt that the great body of the French desire some new change, and since any change must be for their advantage, who will be bold enough to affirm, that, before this year is at an end, the word Republican will not be as much execrated in France as the word Jacobin is now?

Among the various conjectures to which the present situation of France naturally gives birth, there is one which I feel a pleasure in entertaining, if not as the most probable, yet as certainly the most favourable to
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that country. It is, that the nation, weary of the present Convention, indignant at its scandalous conduct, and shocked at the misery which it has brought and still brings upon their country, will oblige it to dissolve itself, to make room for those Members of the Constituent Assembly who still survive; substituting men who were only guilty of errors, instead of men whose whole conduct has been full of crimes. Could the scattered remains of that body be but sincerely reconciled; could they be brought to forgive one another; could Malouet, Cazales, La Fayette, Beaumetz, Mounier, Lally, Montesquiou, D'André, now assemble, after this terrible lesson of misfortune, with that knowledge of mankind, and those habits of reflection, which are taught by experience; with distrust of those theories and speculations in which they formerly so much confided; how different would their language now be to the people! Once little better than rhetoricians, they might now be fit to be statesmen. No doubt their very first act would be to set aside their own absurd Constitution of 1791, too republican for a Monarchy, too monarchical for a Republic. No doubt they would think that the most effectual mode of securing liberty, is by ensuring obedience to legal authority. They commenced their political career with a declaration that France renounced all wars for the purpose of conquest: if again in power, it may be expected that their first measure would be to restore the conquests made during their proscription; their sincerity would not be doubted, and a peace with France would then be equally easy and secure. This great point once accomplished, they might then employ themselves in that important work, which the present leaders, though willing, cannot safely undertake; and which they have not power enough either to promote, or to prevent; though they are constantly exclaiming, in contradiction to their own consciences, that it is impossible.

possible. But the oftener they repeat in the Convention that they are not at all alarmed or afraid of the commencing cry of royalty, the more evident it is that they observe its progress.

For that happy moment when this commencing cry shall run from one end of France to the other, all Frenchmen who are friends to Monarchy should prepare themselves by uniting together, without attending to any slight shades of difference in their opinions on the subject. But the first object of them all should be to unite themselves to that respectable party of converted Republicans, who now hate Democracy as sincerely as they adored it before they were acquainted with it.

And since the press has hitherto so much influenced the fluctuating opinions of the French, all those authors, who like M—— are yet attached to France by endearing recollections of former connexion, or by the ties of interest, should take advantage of the first moment which such a change in that nation will allow, to bring back its attention to the discussion with which it began, and which was not decided by argument, but declamation; that of a supreme hereditary Executive Power, and a Legislative Body, consisting of two distinct Houses.

The surest way to accelerate this desirable event, would be to enlighten the French nation, with respect to some great errors in their notions of the British Constitution; the object which they ought always to have kept in view. Their present leaders endeavour to confirm them in those errors; because they believe, and with reason, that their power depends on keeping the people in ignorance of the way to true liberty; an object to which they know that nothing conduces more than representing the English as (to use their own expression) *slaves at home, and tyrants on the seas*. How happy should I be, if I could in any degree accelerate liberty in the one nation, by doing justice to the enjoyment of it in the other!

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CHAPTER V.

Of some Prejudices of the French respecting the British Constitution.

AMONG the great number of well-informed men in France, before the present Revolution, nothing was more uncommon than to find any who had tolerably correct ideas of the British Constitution; and it must be owned that in general the English who travelled there took no great pains to inform them on the subject. Whether it is that the English are too much inclined to believe that few foreigners can comprehend the principles of so complicated system; or that, with a view to complete the contrast between the character of the two nations, the English studiously affect to be indifferent to the opinion of foreigners; or that, from a principle of humanity, they are unwilling, when abroad, to remind other nations of their want of liberty; and on that account are afraid of expressing too strongly the conviction which is interwoven in every thought, and manifested in every action of an Englishman, *that he, and he only, is free.*

Till Mr. De Lolme published his work, those of the French who had any opinion at all on the subject, were almost all extravagant in praising the British Constitution, or equally extravagant in condemning it.

The former considered it as a system truly divine, unconnected with any human passions, the perfection of political virtue; while, on the contrary, it goes so entirely

entirely upon a consciousness of human imperfection, that it may very properly be called a complete system of *human correction*. It does not proceed upon the impossible speculation of eradicating the passions, or governing without them; but its arrangements are adapted to limit their career, to direct them to the benefit of social life, and even to govern by their assistance.

Next came the censurers, who formed their judgments, partly from writers as ignorant as themselves; and partly from the parliamentary debates, in which they understood every hyperbolical, metaphorical, or declamatory expression, in a literal sense.

First they gravely told you *that the King is always carrying on a secret war against the Constitution*; which has very little other meaning than that the Constitution has provided effectually against open hostilities.

Next they told you *that the House of Peers is evidently a sort of advanced post to the Crown, where the Nobles act the part of sentinels and spies;—that the Peerage is evidently a satellite of the Crown, and only serves to strengthen it against the nation*. Now, no one disputes but that the Peers are intended to guard the Crown, and that their situation does make them a sort of advanced post for its protection; but that post is defensive only: they have no privileges which give them the smallest power of attacking the constitutional rights of the Commons; and their political influence, as a body, depends as much on preventing the despotism, as on maintaining the prerogatives of the Crown.

No matter, say the French of the present day; *an hereditary Nobility is nothing but a great imposition upon society; it is an infringement of those equal rights which all men derive from nature*. But admitting it is so, does it not prevent many other greater, and more dangerous infringements? Are not eminent talents an infringement made by nature herself, of that perfect equality of right which is the foundation-stone in the

new systems of government? Can any human regulations prevent that *Aristocracy of talents** complained of in the Convention? Can we conceive a society which can prevent the Aristocracy of riches? and does not this latter even increase in proportion as a State is well governed? Is it less greedy, or more enlightened, than an hereditary Nobility? Is not this latter species of Aristocracy the best, indeed the only counterpoise, in a great State, to the former? Is the arrogance of upstarts less grating to the people, from among whom they came, or is their familiar insolence less insulting, than the haughty distance of an hereditary Nobility?

Certainly there is in the British Constitution, a Nobility, or rather an hereditary Peerage; I will add too, that the single privilege which it possesses, is by its nature much superior to the whole multitude of petty privileges belonging to the nobles of all other countries in Europe: and let the French mention, if they can, any of the privileges of the British Peerage which are burdensome to the people, or in any way injurious to it.

The French are much mistaken, if they think that in this country wealth is enough to procure nobility; or that, if wealth could purchase it, it would give that exemption from taxes which is the ordinary consequence of it in most other countries. The British Peerage can hardly be said to possess more than one exclusive privilege,† which no doubt is a very great one,

* This Aristocracy was the first which offended French vanity, after it was supposed that the titled and privileged Aristocracy was annihilated. In some sitting of the present Convention, but on what occasion I do not recollect, a member rose to move *That Louvet should not be suffered to crush it with the weight of the Aristocracy of his talents.*

† As members of one of the Houses of Parliament, Peers are exempt from arrest for debt; but their property may be seized for the use of their creditors, without any distinction even of the Princes of the Blood.

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one, and that is, the hereditary right of succeeding to a seat in the House of Lords. I acknowledge that this is a privilege of great importance: but before it is censured as improper, it may be worth considering whether that hereditary succession has not a strong tendency to defend the fundamental principles of the Constitution, as well as to preserve certain great maxims of State, which might else be in danger, in case of the coincidence of a general election, with any violent popular agitation. No one can be ignorant of the effect which popular agitation must always have, in a greater or less degree, on an assembly elected by the people. The most zealous friend even of Democracy will not deny, that it often prevents sound judgment, and that any check upon its innovating spirit is wise, and should be adopted.

It should be recollected that the British Peers are by no means numerous* enough to eclipse the people; that,

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And though the Peers have the privilege of being tried by their own body for criminal offences, yet their punishment, if convicted, is the same as that of a commoner. Henry V. while Prince of Wales, was imprisoned by order of a Judge, of the name of Gascoyne, for having assaulted him on the Bench. Should any foreigner consider this example as of too remote a date, they may be referred to another. While this publication was writing, an English Peer was under imprisonment by sentence of the Court of King's-Bench, for having published a libel on an Attorney, in a news-paper.

* The House of Lords consists at present of 274 members, including the Bishops and the sixteen Scotch Peers. The French Nobility was certainly blind to its own interests, in not endeavouring to screen itself from the storm, before it was too late, by introducing into France, instead of their useless privileges, a representation of their body in a house analogous to the British House of Lords; either partly hereditary and partly elective, or else entirely elective.

On this Note the Translator wishes to remark, that he doubts whether an elective representation of any particular class in a State, especially if periodical, has not a tendency to create a distinct interest by no means consistent with the common good. In the present instance, an hereditary Upper House, formed by a selection from the French Nobility, would certainly be more favourable to the ascendancy of a Lower House, representing the People, than a periodically

as the bulk of the estate usually goes with the title, their fortune gives them the means of a good education; and that, as their privilege is limited to judicial and political functions, it is only by a good education, and by the knowledge and the decorum of character, requisite in those functions, that they can hope to derive any material advantage from their privilege. Education and practice create ability; and one may judge from this circumstance only, that, as a body, the British Nobility can never present, what is but too often seen in other countries, ignorance, pride, and poverty united. The same circumstance too gives them the ability to manage their private affairs better than the Nobility of other countries; and obliges them to be more attentive to character, because their consequence depends so much on public opinion.

Nor is this all: for the younger branches of their families, by being blended with the general mass, form a durable connexion between the Commons to whom they belong, and the Peers from whom they are sprung.

periodically-elective representation of the Nobility, and perhaps than any other species of Senate which can be invented. A periodical or occasional election of representatives of the Aristocracy of a country, under whatever name or form, gives it one common interest, and a disposition to act in concert for supporting it: whereas the British Constitution divides the Aristocratic influence, by having a small political Aristocracy distinct from, and not dependent upon, that general Aristocracy, which is founded in ancient family, and extensive landed property; which, in a tranquil state of society, no possible arrangements can long prevent; and which no political folly can be greater than the adoption of any regulations for preventing.

The Nobles of the present generation in France, who are really men of ancient families and extensive possessions, and who must necessarily have been excluded from all immediate chance of the Peerage, might, from prejudice of habit, feel themselves degraded; but their posterity would feel the advantage of the full influence of a superiority derived from those circumstances, unimpaired by any artificial distinctions, or any privileges tending to excite the jealousy of the people, and keep the two parties in a state of perpetual political warfare. But whatever might be decided as to the mode of forming an Upper House, the members of it should on no account, if elective, be all at once renewed, or be elected for a short period.

This is the kind of Nobility which the Constituent Assembly should have endeavoured to substitute, when, in their first delirium, they agitated the fatal decree which suppressed the rank of Nobility in France; a decree which, in its consequences, occasioned the destruction of those who had the misfortune to be of that order: for it led to the erection of all those bloody tribunals which sent them to the scaffold.

But, at that important crisis, nothing would have more effectually quieted the fears and dissipated the jealousy of the *Tiers Etat*, than telling them, that though there is an order of Nobility established in England, yet in point of taxation, or in any other respect, there is no difference between them and the Commons; that the word *Commoner* has no debasing sense attached to it, nor is a noble family considered as disgraced by an alliance with one of that class:* that seats in the House of Peers are often the reward of distinguished talents; and that those who are so introduced into it, are not treated as upstarts and intruders, but with the respect due to their merit; and that, at the very time when the National Assembly was declaiming against the haughty House of Peers, the two individuals of that body who were next, in point of rank, to the Royal Family, were both born of parents not above the middle class of life.† It is not now, perhaps, too late to present the following observation to the *Tiers Etat* of France, which has often excited my own admiration; I mean, that Great-Britain, where, without doubt, Nobility is

* The original is, "there are no words in the language of that nation for *roture* and *mésalliance*."—The observation is perfectly just, and accounts for the paraphrase to which the Translator has been obliged to resort, in order to express the author's meaning.

† One of them, the late Lord Chancellor, when according to the rules of the House of Peers he delivered in his pedigree, only mentioned in it the names of his father and mother. The deference to his opinion has not been less, because his pedigree was not longer.

is more valuable, and therefore more desirable than in any other country, is yet the only one where there are a number of ancient and opulent families who have little or no inclination to be raised to that rank. Such is the effect of a Constitution which makes every rank respectable, and which can bestow its honours without humbling those who do not partake of them!

But, in fact, those who declaim, in France, against the British Constitution, inveigh chiefly against the House of Commons. "That House," say they, "holds the strings of the purse; and if it is clamorous at any time, it is only with the hope of having its mouth stopped with gold. Thanks to the civil list, which it occasionally takes care to increase, the Ministers have always the means of bribing its members, and making them vote just as they please. If they do not give them money, they give them places; and when they have made their bargains, they can, with impunity, set public opinion at defiance."

Some truth perhaps there is in this, mingled with a great deal of error; and a few explanations are necessary, to distinguish the one from the other.

Without doubt, there exists a ministerial influence; and partly by conferring places, partly by promising them, that influence is very extensive. But before it is blamed, three points should be considered: 1st, Whether a majority of the members are under that influence? 2dly, Whether that influence, to the extent under which it exists, is more pernicious than useful? 3dly, Whether it can be exerted in cases which affect the liberty of the nation?

With a view to a solution of these questions, I shall consider the House of Commons as divided into three classes. The first is composed of those who support the Minister, either from considerations of personal attachment, or as holding places under Government, or as looking forwards to them. The second class

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includes the Opposition, and consists of those who wish to supplant the Ministry, and of their intimate connexions, who would follow them into power, and participate in their administration. The third consists of those who are not desirous of taking an active part in government, whose ambition is to shew the pride of independence, and to watch over the interests of the nation, without caring much which party is at the helm.—This class is usually more numerous than the Opposition, but perhaps less so than the immediate friends of Administration; and is a kind of neutral power, joining sometimes the one, sometimes the other party, as it thinks most for the public good, and is sure to carry victory with it. On unimportant questions it thinks it a duty not to oppose Administration, even though not entirely satisfied with it;† but if it be dissatisfied on important questions, it then exerts its whole influence, and the Minister must give way to it.

This is what deceives foreigners, when they think that the majority is entirely composed of the ministerial party; though in fact the object of a very large proportion of that *majority* is, not to support the Minister, but only the Government. The members who consider themselves as independent of both parties, no doubt, cannot be exempt from the partialities of human nature; and may, from various circumstances, have a preference for men or for measures, which may incline them more to one party than to the other; but their object is to act without being under the influence of either.

Whether Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox be at the head of affairs, is not with them the most material point; but that

† This is not only true of those members who are independent of party, but even, in many instances, of those who happen to be in Opposition; who, with whatever violence they may attack the members of Administration and their measures, yet, on common occasions, consider it as a maxim not to impede the ordinary progress of Government.

that the interests of the nation do not suffer, and that the rights of their constituents are not infringed—This class is particularly attentive to the public opinion; and though it checks the current of it when proceeding too much from popular agitation, yet it always adopts it, when clear and decided; and always succeeds in obliging the Minister, either to change his measures, or to quit his place, if he obstinately perseveres in them.

A majority must not be condemned in the mass as corrupt, unless that majority supports the Minister on important questions, with the same implicit confidence as in the common business of government: but that is by no means the case: for, not to go any farther back than the present administration of Mr. Pitt, if foreigners think that his name, his place, and his abilities, are magnets which draw to him on every occasion an invincible majority, it is perhaps because they have not observed that even Mr. Pitt, whom they consider as so all-powerful, has several times been in a minority; and that several times, on having proposed measures which he considered as important, but to which the public opinion was hostile, the very members who so generally support him, have strongly opposed him, and obliged him to withdraw them.*

Another

* Thus, the Ministers, in 1791, stopped their preparations for war against Russia; and Mr. Pitt himself proposed the repeal of the shop-tax, &c. &c. &c.

If against this it is alledged, that the American war was prolonged in opposition to the general wish of the nation; I answer, that the American war was at first extremely popular, and still more so when France took part in it; but as soon as it was become decidedly unpopular, the majority of the House of Commons opposed Lord North, and obliged him to resign; so that the example confirms the assertion, instead of contradicting it. The peace which terminated that war, confirms it in a still more striking manner. It is now generally acknowledged that Lord Shelburne, who negotiated that peace, did his country a most essential service by it; yet, at the time when it was concluded, it occasioned a great deal of discontent; the result was, that the House of Commons again sacrificed the Ministry to the public opinion.

More than one instance can be mentioned, when the influence of the Ministry* could not contend against the independence of Parliament; and when Mr. Pitt submitted to the representatives of the people, just as they submit to their constituents, not in the heat of popular agitation, but upon calm and deliberate consideration.

Another complaint is, that this House represents the people unequally. This is not denied;† but it is much more to the purpose to consider, whether it does

* Several instances of this might be mentioned; among others, the project of extensive fortifications on the sea-coast, which was rejected principally upon the grounds that it would increase ministerial influence; and that it tended to an augmentation of the army, at the expence of the navy, which the English, with so much reason, call the *wooden walls* of their Island.

† It is much more easy to discover an imperfection, than to apply a remedy. An imperfection in theory, no doubt it is; but it may be questioned whether it is so in practice. Mr. De Lolmé says nothing on the subject; and Mr. Adams says no more than this: “If the people are not equally represented in the House of Commons, this is a departure in practice from theory; if the Lords return members of the House of Commons, this is an additional disturbance of the balance: whether the Crown and the people, in such a case, will not see the necessity of uniting in a remedy, are questions beyond my pretensions.”

I certainly agree with Mr. Adams, that the representation of the people in the House of Commons is not agreeable to the usually-received theory of representation; but I go no farther with him. For a little observation will shew that this abuse in theory receives a great many useful modifications in practice; and one is astonished to discover in it interests counterbalancing one another, which writers upon the subject have neglected to mention. For instance, I am much inclined to believe, that if the last project of parliamentary reform which came before the House of Commons had been adopted, an absolute preponderance in that House would have been given to the ancient and opulent families. That perhaps might have done no harm; but yet, it must be observed, that the rotten boroughs, as they are called, give an opportunity to many men of merit, with moderate fortunes, and little popular interest, of coming into Parliament, who would otherwise hardly find admission there. In what way but this did both Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox begin their parliamentary career so

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does not represent the opinion of the people, with as much fidelity, as a more equal representation would; and whether, considering the number of its members, their property, their education, and their personal influence with their constituents as well as with Government,

young, in which both of them have rendered such essential services to their country?—But I abstain from entering into a question which, like Mr. Adams, I feel to be above my pretensions, and which it would perhaps be unbecoming in a foreigner to attempt to discuss.

Though the Author declines entering into the question, the Translator, as an Englishman, may be allowed to introduce a few remarks on so essential a part of the government of his country as the Constitution of the House of Commons. It strikes him that perhaps that even the theories of representation, which are usually adopted, are not free from imperfection, in consequence of more attention being given to the form than to the utility of the institution. If in any instance utility is the chief object, then the consideration of the most effectual means of promoting that utility should be principally attended to; and if those means are not morally wrong, they must be politically right. What then, I think, might theoretically be wished for, in an Assembly representing the people, is, 1st, That the persons composing it should be influenced by public opinion, on all subjects, where the circumstances are so much within the scope of general observation that the judgment of the public can be sound and decisive; 2dly, That they should not be under the controul of popular agitations; 3dly, That no particular description or class of the people should have a dangerously-preponderating influence over them.

In theory then, the construction of a national representative body should be such, that amid the rivalries of different occupations, and of different ranks, no one should have a preponderance over the others. If either population, landed property, commerce, or manufactures, have such a preponderance, the decisions of the elected body must be proportionably partial; and without commenting on the injustice, it is enough to consider the impolicy of such a system.—If again an attempt is made, as in some small Republics it has been made, to give to each description of persons a right of electing a fixed proportion of the whole elected body; this most evidently constitutes it, in a way which forms a demarcation of the different interests, and by which the representatives become rather the agents and committees of their respective constituents, than men acting with one common motive, to one common end—the public good.

Without

ment, the House of Commons is not the best informed, and the most independent public assembly in the Universe.

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Without entering into a detailed application of these observations to the British House of Commons, I will only observe, that the very different construction of the electoral bodies, and the preponderance of different ranks and occupations in different electoral bodies, actually give a representation of each, and in a certain degree a representation by each; while, at the same time, this is done without at all marking out the different descriptions of people, as by a census; without proclaiming hostilities between them; and with such shades of difference as prevent the preponderance of any one description, to the injury of the rest. Such practically is the British House of Commons: how far the proportionate influence of each class is such as best contributes to the common good, the experience of its conduct will determine better than any abstract speculation; and that will most evidently prove, 1st, That the persons composing it are influenced by public opinion on all subjects where the circumstances are so much within the scope of general observation that the judgment of the public can be sound and decisive; 2dly, That they are *not* under the controul of popular agitations; and, 3dly, That no particular description or class of the people has a dangerously-preponderating influence there.

From effects which are beneficial, we should look back to their causes; and instead of substituting new causes, with a view to greater perfection, we should consider by what means any causes already productive of useful effects may be made more extensively useful. Improvements, whether mechanical, moral, or political, are not made by adopting the language of projectors, "Such or such effects will be produced; let us try:" but by following the conduct of those who say, "Such or such effects have been produced; let us, if possible, discover the cause." A mind formed by this practice of investigation, moves, it may be said, only step by step; but then every step is progressive.—While the projector is wandering backward and forward in the wilds of conjecture, inventing what has perhaps been long ago superseded by inventions more perfect, and contesting what correcter knowledge can demonstrate, the other is securely advancing beyond the utmost reach of previously-accumulated experience. Look to the contemplative and retrospective habits of the one nation, and the lively imagination and precipitate confidence of the other; and the difference in the political conduct of the French and English, may be easily traced to the moral difference of their characters, of which indeed the political, strictly speaking, is but a part.

"But, if it were so," some of the French will say, "how could that gradual increase of the influence of the Crown arise, of which we have heard so much? and what necessity was there for that solemn declaration of the House of Commons in 1780, that *the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished.*" What has constantly been observed with respect to that vote is so evident, that no additional arguments are necessary to remove this objection. That vote displaced the Minister, and is itself a proof that the influence complained of did not exist to the degree stated, and is too weak to oppose public opinion. And as to the increase of that influence, the following list of Acts of Parliament passed during the present reign, may assist our judgment on that point.

1. That which (by the desire of his present Majesty) set bounds to the civil list, and placed the administration of that revenue in hands that are accountable to Parliament.

2. That which (by the like desire) increased the independence of the Judges, by continuing them in their places, notwithstanding a demise of the crown.

3. The *Nullum Tempus* Act, as it is generally called, by which the statutes of limitations were extended to the Crown. An immense acquisition in a country where property is every thing.

4. The Act, usually called Mr. Grenville's Bill, which passed in 1770, and which rescues the decisions on controverted elections from any ministerial influence, by referring them to committees elected by ballot, and acting upon oath.

5. The Act passed in 1782, by which every person who holds a contract under Government is rendered incapable of sitting in the House of Commons.

6. Another Act passed in the same year, by which were suppressed a number of places long since established, and very lucrative; and by which the power

power of the Crown, with respect to granting pensions, was limited.

7. Another Act of the same year, which excluded a great number of persons holding appointments under Government from voting at elections for members of parliament.

8. The Act which passed three years ago, and which was intended to give additional security to the Liberty of the Press, by ascertaining the right of the Jury in prosecutions for libels, to decide not only upon the fact of publishing, but also upon the innocence or criminality of the publication. *

These restrictions and limitations have been so far from weakening the strength of Government, that they have tended very considerably to increase it, by increasing the confidence of the public, which is too well assured of its freedom, and too conscious of its strength, to be terrified or imposed upon by those who

* No doubt, if I were better informed on the subject, I should be able to mention other laws, not so important perhaps, yet tending more or less to the same object. A long chapter would be necessary, to point out the great number of acts of regulation which have passed in the same period for correcting internal imperfections or abuses, and improving the condition of the people. But, without confining myself to Great Britain, if I extend my views to the conduct of its government with respect to conquered nations, its liberality towards Canada and Corsica is sufficiently known; and with regard to India, it is absolutely unknown upon the continent, that, under the administration of Lord Cornwallis, not only the interior custom-houses which had existed from time immemorial in Bengal, to the great oppression of trade, were totally abolished; but the permanent right of territorial property, never before known in that country, was first granted to the native landholders (who under the Mogul government only possessed their estates by a yearly settlement). Such a blessing bestowed upon fifteen millions of people would have been alone sufficient to immortalize any administration. The statesmen of France who are continually inveighing against the oppressions exercised by the English in India, either from ignorance or want of candour, never think proper to bring this act to light; perhaps, lest the contrast should be remarked between such a conduct and that of their own Convention, which, under the pretence of liberty, has robbed almost an equal number of its fellow-citizens of the property they enjoyed before the Revolution.

for their own purposes, would wish to keep it in a state of constant alarm. The nation at large cares very little who is Minister; and is, perhaps, less attentive to his conduct than it would otherwise be, if it did not know that the Opposition is ever on the watch for opportunities to recommend itself to favour, by giving notice of the slightest appearance of danger; and if it did not also know that the independent party in Parliament is ever at hand to interfere, and to prevent the danger (if there be any) from becoming fatal.

Whence come so many important ameliorations, and within so short a space of time, but from a principle in the Constitution which renders it capable of self-improvement, as well as self-protection? It cannot be that the Parliament, though unequally elected, either is so corrupt, or so disposed to indulge corruption, as is sometimes believed: this principle in the Constitution puts it out of danger of those convulsions which *regeneration* has occasioned in France, and gives it a slow, but sure, and uninterrupted tendency towards every sort of amelioration; and makes it what D'Argenson called the perfection of Government, a *perpetual innovation*.

This chain of happy alterations sufficiently proves, in my opinion, that the construction of the British Parliament disposes it, of its own will, to adopt measures of improvement depending on times and circumstances; for it must be observed, that none of these measures were forced upon it by any popular commotions, and all of them were well considered and deliberately adopted.

Instead of such a Constitution, containing a principle of self-improvement, Abbé Sieyès has influenced the opinions of the French Nation in favour of the American system of Conventions. In his discourse on the *Veto*, he seems to pity the ignorance of the English in not discovering so infallible a political remedy; whereas the very security of the British Constitution

Constitution arises precisely from its never wanting it; from there being a well-constructed and well-balanced Legislature, and from this Legislature being altogether unlimited in the use of its powers. *Conventions*, whether occasional, or periodical, answer no other end but to produce a public fermentation, to which ambitious men will look forward, and by which they will endeavour to advance themselves by sowing trouble and discord: their tendency is to diminish the confidence of the people in their regular Legislative Assemblies; to impede public business by perpetual doubts of their competency to treat it; to transfer the formation of a constitutional law, of which that body can best determine the propriety, to a Conventional Assembly, which can neither have the same general experience, nor the same means of judging of the convenience or necessity of the proposition.— Besides, whenever a Convention meets, every thing must necessarily be in commotion; all ideas are revolutionary, and sober deliberation is at an end. A Convention, and especially a French Convention, would think it a point of honour not to part without doing something; and innovations would be made, merely to avoid the disgrace of not having innovated. Not one of these inconveniences attends the British Parliament, which enjoys the plenitude of legislative power. None contest its authority; it has no distinct political body behind it, to suspend, or modify, or reverse its decrees; and it is always able to change the existing laws, or adapt them to circumstances.

It is really astonishing that experience has not yet corrected this erroneous opinion of the French on the nature of Conventions. By the new plan which Cambaceres lately presented, it may be observed that they still retain the absurd notion of limiting the powers of the legislative body, and of not permitting it to touch any of the constitutional laws. If they

still

still persist in having Conventions, either extraordinary or periodical, they may be assured that Revolution must succeed Revolution, and the nation be perpetually on the eve of civil war.

What I have said respecting the British Constitution, as it appears in practice, I am sensible, is but an imperfect sketch; for the subject, even if I were capable of treating it more accurately, is much too extensive, as well as too profound, for the limits of a pamphlet, written in haste, and on the spur of the occasion. My only object, in this Chapter, has been to turn the attention of the French to the absurdity of that declamatory abuse of the British Constitution, which, for five years past, has been employed to prejudice them against it, and induce them to think it as vicious in practice, as it is perfect in theory. All I desire is, to be able to correct some of the prevailing errors among them on this subject, and to induce them to believe it worth a fuller examination, and to read the publications which develop the elements of it. The most complete work on this subject is certainly that of Mr. De Lolme; none more clearly explains its principles, or is more explicit, on the manner in which its different branches are a check upon one another, and on the security it gives to personal liberty.

In France, I hardly know more than two authors who have comprehended, or have done justice to it;† I mean, Mr. Necker, and Mr. de Calonne. Of those, the former has undoubtedly considered the subject with most attention, and understands it best; and he too can say, with Mr. De Lolme:—"Born in a free State,

† It is plain that Montesquieu admired the British Constitution, and was well acquainted with its excellencies; but perhaps he thought it prudent not to disclose them in France.

Lately, in the Constituent Assembly, some of the most distinguished members of that body, Malouet, Mounier, and Lally, recommended it, and proposed the adoption of it; but the quickness with which they were silenced, sufficiently proves, how little the French were at that time prepared for a political Revolution.

State, though of a small extent, I not only have a native love of liberty, but have heard all the questions discussed which relate to it.—Is not the vital principle the same in an insect, as in an elephant? Is any one less able to study the republic of beavers, because he has long been employed in studying that of the bees?" Mr. de Calonne's residence in England gave him an opportunity of seeing the British Constitution in practice; and he openly recommended it to his countrymen, without recollecting that they would probably answer: "*Genius invents, and scorns to imitate*; we will not condescend to tread in the footsteps of the English."

It is a circumstance worthy remarking, that the two first writers who attempted to recommend the British Constitution to the French, were rival Ministers of Finance. Opposite and hostile on every other subject; in this, and in this only, they agree, that the British Constitution, which both have studied, and both admire, may by some modifications be gradually introduced into France.

Perhaps the most unfortunate step of the Constituent Assembly, is one for which it has been very little censured; I mean, its having voted the Monarchy, exactly as the Convention has since voted the Republic,—by acclamation. If that Assembly had but calmly and gravely debated the important question of limited Monarchy; such a discussion, if carried to a sufficient extent, and closely investigated, might have shewn the French a great number of valuable political truths, which they were at that time still capable of attending to, and which might then have made a deep and lasting impression. But another opportunity may soon offer. Equally dissatisfied with the extremes of absolute Monarchy, and lawless Democracy, it is impossible but that the great majority of the nation should now wish for something between

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both.

both. France, by the reflux of public opinion, may be brought back to the leaders with whom she began, and whose wish was a limited Monarchy: if that should ever happen, it is to be hoped that dear-bought experience will have taught them to deliberate before they decide.

CONCLUSION.

PEACE is the universal and earnest prayer of all the Powers at war with France. Why will not the French then at last see the abyss into which the obstinacy of the present Convention is precipitating them? Can it be possible that they still deceive themselves? Do they still imagine that a government can be renovated amid the din of arms, and the dangers of war? or that famine at home can be prevented, by employing the strength of their country in maintaining a precarious possession of desolated conquests?

What can they hope to gain by prolonging this bloody contest? Is it glory? They have already borne down all opposition. Do they wish for more conquests? Those they have already made have injured them more than a diminution of territory would have done. What then prevents them? False shame. They will not submit to the humiliation of restitution. But which is least humiliating—a retreat from choice, or a retreat from evident necessity? What humiliation can there be in restoring what they have taken, to enemies whom they have vanquished? And as to Great-Britain, can they doubt a moment but that such an unequivocal proof of their pacific disposition would produce a similar disposition in her? Do they fear, that the Princes at war with them will take advantage of such restitutions, to renew the contest on the frontier?

tier? That *frontier of iron* is an impenetrable security against any such enterprise. Europe is more than ever convinced of the defensive strength of France, and the military spirit of its inhabitants. They need fear nothing but from themselves; none but themselves will ever be able to desolate that fertile country, destroy its population, and deaden its industry; none but themselves can ever make her the prey of conquerors, by making her too feeble for resistance.

Six months have elapsed since their leaders avowed that the nation *longs for internal tranquillity, and the happiness it gives*. This has been openly avowed in the Convention itself; and yet not one step has been taken by that body, that indicates a desire of peace with Britain; without which, *internal tranquillity* is impossible. The Convention not only sees, but publishes to the world, the destitute condition of France; and yet, instead of making any advances towards the only peace which can give them a chance of relief from abroad for the want they feel at home, they persist in representing a *war at sea against Great-Britain, as absolutely necessary*.* It is, I acknowledge, absolutely necessary

* Observe what Pelet says of the views of the Committees, as to Great-Britain, in a statement of the interior and exterior situation of France; which the Convention ordered to be printed, April the 8th.—“*We hoped to have no longer more than one NECESSARY war to support; that is, a war at sea against England, whose power and insolence our united force would be sufficient to crush.* Is it by such language that the leaders of the Convention mean to disarm Britain and her Allies!

If such language could disarm the English, I imagine that hereafter their *pride* would not often be talked of! Impartial persons may decide which of the two nations is at present most infected with this vice, by comparing the declarations of the Convention, and the speeches and reports printed by its order, with the vote of both Houses of Parliament.—“*That they rely on the desire uniformly manifested by his Majesty, to effect a pacification on just and honourable grounds, with any Government in France, under whatever form, which shall appear capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries.* If the Convention had wished at all

necessary to the ambition of those who lead the Convention, and to the existence of the Republic they have made ; for they still retain the spirit, though they dare not, as a body, *avow* the language of their incendiary decree of the 19th of November, 1792.†
Amity

all for peace with England, this gave an opening, which, if it had been followed by some equally conciliatory counter-declaration, might have probably led to additional proofs of a disposition to treat, on the part of this country. But the more this country desires a peace, the more active the Convention is in taking measures to make it impossible. A sufficient proof of this is the inflammatory proclamation addressed by it on the 29th of May, to the Toulon fleet.

Brave Seamen ! War, war with the English ! It is they who seek to divide you, and to corrupt you. It is they who, afraid to encounter you at sea, have endeavoured to detain you in port. WAR, WAR, with the English !

It is worth observing, that nearly at the time when the Convention was thus proclaiming war against the English, the two Houses of Parliament were debating whether it would not be proper to make further advances towards a reconciliation.

† This decree, it is well known, was the work of the Girondist party, which is now again triumphant, and which acting upon it in its fullest extent, in the affair with Geneva, refused to ratify a treaty, by declaring, *that the only one admissible was a communication of principles*. Though the authors of that decree have suffered it to sleep, yet, every now and then, they discover their intention of bringing it into action again whenever it suits their convenience. Of this, I think, the following ludicrous transactions in the Convention, on the 26th and 27th of April, are clear evidence.

On the 26th, Gregoire concluded a pompous harangue, by proposing a declaration of the Rights of Nations, much in the same style as that of the Rights of Man.

The 4th Article declares, *that nations, when at war, should do one another as little mischief as possible* ; and this extremely philanthropic article was applauded by the very same men who have been barbarians enough to send a squadron to destroy the humane establishment of Sierra Leone ; the object of which was a generous attempt to prevent, what they talk so much of preventing—Slavery.

The 14th Article declares, *that treaties which have for their object an offensive war, are high treason against the family of mankind*. And this too, the Convention applauded, though they well

Amity with Great-Britain might teach their people the means of obtaining true liberty. The declaimers in the Convention are for ever talking of a war with Great-Britain, and yet for ever confessing their inability to maintain it. Their first and last resource must soon be at an end : and yet still they can say, with an air of surprise, *The English Ministry feign a belief that France is exhausted.* The English Ministry, then, is not to believe their own declarations ; and is unable to

well knew that at that very time their Deputies were contracting an *offensive* as well as defensive alliance with the United Provinces.

The 7th Article declares, *that a nation has no right to interfere in the government of other nations.* What is meant by *government*, the next article explains ; which expressly declares, **THAT NO GOVERNMENTS ARE CONFORMABLE TO THE RIGHTS OF NATIONS, BUT ONLY SUCH AS ARE FOUNDED ON LIBERTY AND EQUALITY.**

The next day, however, Merlin of Douay mounted the tribune in great haste, and announced in the name of the *Committee of Public Safety*, " That all Europe having heard their declaration, never to examine, much less never to censure, the fundamental principles, or the organization of foreign governments ; it is material to the Republic, and possibly to the safety of all Europe, to repeal the decree of the preceding evening, that ordered the printing of a speech, and of a declaration of the rights of nations which had been read in that Assembly. The Committee, said he, has observed in both, *principles which you cannot avow.* I need not mention what might be the consequences of such opinions spread through Europe in the present moment."

" *As it is imagined that my speech contains something improper,*" said Gregoire, " *I second the motion ; but I ought to mention, that perhaps, by this time, it has appeared in some of the papers ;*" which was really the case, for care had been taken to insert it in the *Moniteur*.

I may, perhaps, be told, that these ought to be considered as two additional recantations. But are these recantations much less alarming than the decree ? Neither the spirit of this declaration, nor the intentions of the propagandist, Gregoire, are censured. *They are pure as the mind of its author,* said Merlin : the declaration is withdrawn for no other reason but because it is ill-timed ; because this is *not the moment to avow such an opinion to Europe.*

to observe with what hasty steps France is now verifying the remark of La Reveillère, about three months ago, in the Convention: *Revolution follows Revolution; and, when the whole circle is gone round, we come back to the point from which we set out—Despotism.*

Every sitting of the Convention, every debate proves that the Republic is already falling to pieces, and that its ruin is inevitable. One day the conquerors of the Bastille come to announce to the Convention, that they *almost regret what they have sacrificed for the Republic.* Then comes a Section to ask for *bread!* while another orders it to *make haste, and restore the assignats to their original credit.* A third comes with a request which is not less impossible, to *clear up the inextricable labyrinth of the finances.* A fourth protests against the Democratic Constitution of May, 1793, to which that Section had sworn fidelity; and insists, *that it is a virtue to break a wicked oath.* The unhappy people at last begins to open its eyes, and will soon find that revolution and equality have reduced it to penury, famine, and perjury.

What then are we to think of the caution with which the Author of *Reflections on Peace* has avoided saying a word on the finances of France? After speaking of *England as a cultivated country, which trembles under the feet of Mr. Pitt,* why did not she strengthen her argument, by displaying the means which France has in reserve for continuing a war, which, we are to believe, will, if continued, aggrandize her still more than at present, by conquests more extensive. A few words on the subject she does say, (p. 7): *As to the treasures of the Convention, they are the fortune of every individual in France; and her supplies are the productions of her own soil.* Cambon's report to the Convention, which is quoted, page 41, will give us the amount of the *voluntary donations* which have been *extorted* from the people, and prove how willing individuals are to replenish its treasury.

treasury. But a still better foundation for forming an opinion on that subject, because more recent, and from the ruling party, is the brilliant discourse of Pelet, the 8th of last April, which was printed by order of the Convention. After citing, word for word, some passages from this favourite publication, *the Reflections on Peace*, and, among others, that which I have just quoted, he adds, with the thoughtlessness of a true Frenchman: *These pompous terms—"public good, and "love of our country," are in every one's mouth; yet few of us think it honourable to be virtuous and poor; all want to be rich. The most dangerous enemy we have, is an unfeeling and BARBAROUS SELFISHNESS. The dearth of every sort of commodity is beyond calculation; a month, a day, an hour raises the price to a degree which proves the most alarming and immoral avarice, a real dearth, the want of public confidence, dissatisfaction with the present, and fear of the future. WHERE WILL THIS ALARMING PROGRESSION END? Not with partial peaces; not while the strength of their country is exhausted in defending conquests; not till there is real amity with Great-Britain.—And yet in this same speech, which I imagine he did not wish should be unheard of in London, he still proposes to crush England!*

I wish I had no greater complaint against my opponent than errors of thoughtlessness, and such concealments as these. But what can excuse her gratifying her passion for making an impression on the Continent, by insinuating that the British Parliament rejects a peace for no other reason, but that *perhaps Mr. Pitt must resign the conduct of the negotiation into other hands. A peace, says M——, would recall Mr. Fox to the Ministry: Mr. Pitt's only alarm arises from this dilemma. Is it for the nation to think as he does? Cannot England exist, unless Mr. Pitt be the Minister?* *

* *Reflections on Peace*, p. 31.

